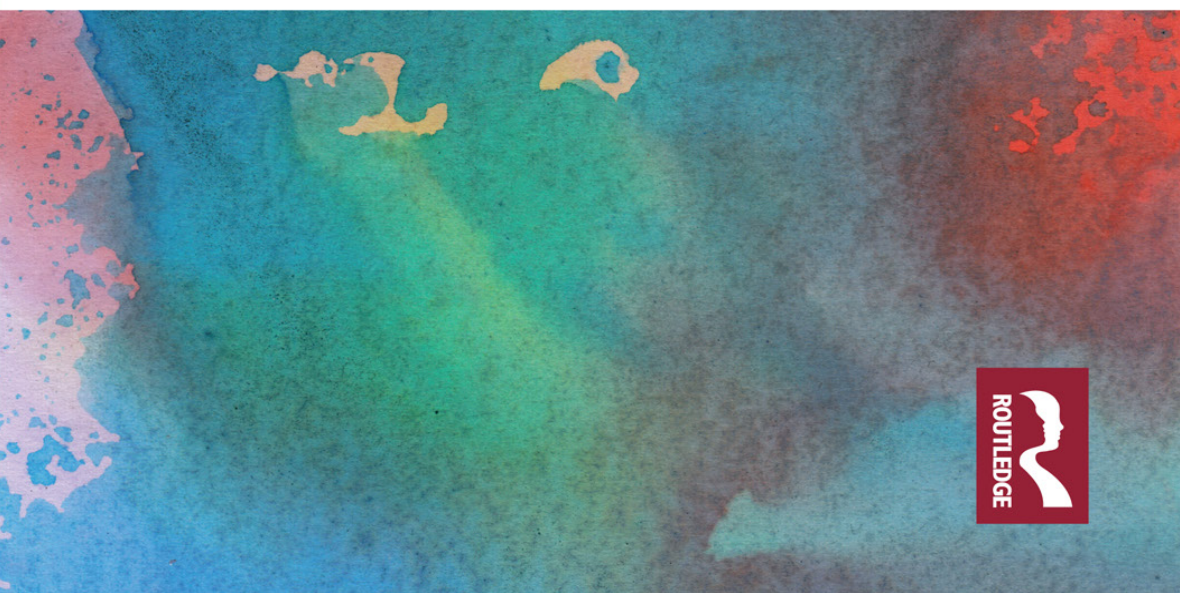
Copenhagen International Seminar

HELLENISM AND THE PRIMARY HISTORY

THE IMPRINT OF GREEK SOURCES IN GENESIS – 2 KINGS

Robert Karl Gnuse



Hellenism and the Primary History

This collection of essays seeks to demonstrate that many biblical authors deliberately used Classical and Hellenistic Greek texts for inspiration when crafting many of the narratives in the Primary History.

Through detailed analysis of the text, Gnuse contends that there are numerous examples of clear influence from late Classical and Hellenistic literature. Deconstructing the Greek and the biblical works in parallel, he argues that there are too many similarities in basic theme, meaning, and detail for them to be accounted for by coincidence or shared ancient tropes. Using this evidence, he concludes that although much of the text may originate from the Persian period, large parts of its final form likely date from the Hellenistic era.

With the help of an original introduction and final chapter, Gnuse pulls his essays together into a coherent collection for the first time. The resultant volume offers a valuable resource for anyone working on the dating of the Hebrew Bible, as well as those working on Hellenism in the ancient Levant more broadly.

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I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved

wife of 38 years, Beth Hammond Gnuse

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testament und des Antiken Judentum
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInterp	*Biblical Interpretation*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CIS	Copenhagen International Seminar
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
Herm	Hermeneia
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HTKAT	Herders Theologische Kommentar zum Alten Testament
IB	*Interpreter's Bible*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*The Jewish Bible Quarterly*

JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
NCB	New Century Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OrAnt	*Oriens antiquus*
OTL	Old Testament Library
RB	*Revue biblique*
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
STR	Studies in Theology and Religion
STRev	*Sewanee Theological Review*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

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"From Prison to Prestige: The Hero who Helps a King in Jewish and Greek Literature", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010): 31–45.

"Divine Messengers in Genesis 18–19 and Ovid." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 31 (2017): 66–79.

"Greek Connections: Genesis 1–11 and the Poetry of Hesiod", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 47 (2017): 131–43.

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Robert Karl Gnuse

Introduction

An intellectual odyssey

I took my first course in the introduction to the Old Testament in the fall of 1963 at Saint Paul's College in Concordia, Missouri. It liberalized my views, for one of the chief texts was George Ernest Wright's *Biblical Archaeology* (Wright 1962). I became an Albrightian and moved away from the unconscious fundamentalism of my earlier education. Then in the fall of 1966 I became acquainted with the four source documentary hypothesis, and my views shifted further to the left as I underwent a second intellectual transformation. After reading the books by Thomas Thompson (*The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*) and John Van Seters (*Abraham in History and Tradition*) in the 1970s, my scholarly opinions were challenged yet again (Thompson 1974; Van Seters 1975). But not until the later 1980s did I become convinced of the views expressed by Van Seters and others, that the bulk of the Pentateuchal material was exilic and post-exilic. I thus undertook a third great intellectual shift. In the 1990s my views were challenged by Giovanni Garbini, Niels Peter Lemche, and others, and by the 2000s I became increasingly convinced that some of the materials in the Primary History originated after 300 BCE in the Hellenistic era. That was my fourth paradigm shift. By the 2010s, as I published my own critical observations, I became convinced that a goodly portion of the Primary History originated in the Hellenistic era, and moved even further into a critical perspective of the biblical text. After five such significant intellectual paradigm shifts in my life, I don't think I can move any further. Much of where I have come to stand presently is due especially to the writings of Niels Peter Lemche and others in the Copenhagen school. A detailed presentation and discussion of outstanding founders and members of the Copenhagen school are offered in the first chapter. I consider myself, however, a somewhat "modified minimalist" in that I believe significant portions of the Primary History originated in the Persian period, but that the final form of the Primary History assumed its shape in the Hellenistic era after 300 BCE with equally significant additions, not long before the gradual, piecemeal translations of the Greek Septuagint. (However, who knows where the 2020s will take my views.)

Some observers of the minimalist/maximalist debate pretend that these positions are polar opposites. My experience is that they are simply on a spectrum, a spectrum through which I have moved through the years. Both maximalists

and minimalists use archaeology as a resource; minimalists use archaeological resources without recourse to the biblical text for their interpretation, maximalists place archaeological finds into a framework provided by the biblical text. Both maximalists and minimalists use critical methodology; minimalists use it to determine that most of the biblical text is profound theological fiction, maximalists use it to reconstruct a viable history of Israel free from obviously miraculous components of the narrative.[1] I have at various stages in my life held to the assumptions of both positions; they are stages on a spectrum across which I and others have moved. Philip Davies summed up these polarities in greater detail than I, but the substance of his argument was similar (Davies 2014).

The essays in this volume represent my observations on the Hellenistic origins of many biblical texts; they have been written during the years 1998–2019. At first I suggested Hellenistic origins for selected passages in the Deuteronomistic History. I observed Greek parallels for narratives in the Deuteronomistic History that could reasonably be seen as later insertions into the biblical text because they were in sections that could appear as interpolations into the basic narrative of the Deuteronomistic History (1 Samuel 23; Judges 21; and Judges 13–16) (Gnuse 1998; 2007; 2018b). These chapters were part of larger sections that seemed to be appendages in the Deuteronomistic History, and I called these added sections in Judges 13–21 and 2 Samuel 21–24 "Anhangen", that is "additions" to the basic narrative of the Deuteronomistic History. My later observations of other Pentateuchal texts seemed to imply Greek influence on biblical narratives generated between 400–300 BCE (Genesis 41; Genesis 1–11), passages I perceived to be somewhat later in origin compared to the rest of the Primary History (the Joseph Novella and the Primeval History). My observations on the accounts of Joseph as a dream interpreter in Genesis 41 and Greek historians as an influence underlying Genesis 1–11 came from a middle stage in the development of my reflections, the latter article simply took several years to find a publisher (Gnuse 2010; 2017b; 2019a). However, when studying texts from within the core narratives of the Pentateuch (Genesis 19; Numbers 22) and Deuteronomistic History (Judges 11), I was led to suspect that Hellenistic influence is found significantly throughout most of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic Narratives (Gnuse 2017a; 2017c; 2019b). Thus, the Persian period origin for narratives in Genesis 1–11, 41 could also be more likely pushed down into the Hellenistic period. The comprehensive analysis of individual texts by Russell Gmirkin, Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano, and Philippe Wajdenbaum (all discussed in the first essay), combined with the general analysis in the more recent writings of Thomas Thompson and especially Niels Peter Lemche, have pushed my thought further in this direction (Gnuse 2018a).

Taken in their totality, these essays imply that biblical authors had a wide-ranging familiarity with Greek literature. In the Hellenistic age one could assume that a few Jewish intellectuals might have familiarity with Greek literature, and that they could have been responsible for shaping old biblical traditions with Greek literature at their disposal. One should not assume that a wide

range of Greek authors would have familiarity with somewhat obscure Jewish traditions, at least obscure from a Greek perspective. The texts that I have analyzed come from a number of biblical books: Genesis, Numbers, Judges, and 2 Samuel. They span the breadth of the Primary History in Genesis through 2 Kings, and this implies to me that all of that biblical literature took its final form in an age when Jewish scribal intelligentsia were familiar with Greek literature.

What I believe to be truly significant is that none of these accounts I have analyzed is a doublet with another biblical story. There are numerous biblical doublets in the Primary History, and a doublet betokens the existence of sources, of either fragmentary or extended narratives, that were used by the final authors of biblical books. For years scholars have pointed to the doublets as proof of the documentary hypothesis for the shaping of the Pentateuch, or sources used by the Deuteronomistic History. Even though the four source hypothesis has been challenged in Pentateuchal research and the developmental process of the Deuteronomistic History has been greatly debated, the doublets remain embedded in the text challenging scholars to explain their presence. Even though fundamentalists attempt to explain away their existence and turn intellectual cartwheels in their attempts, the doublets remain. Even though critical scholars try to fit them into developmental scenarios which in turn take abrasive criticisms from other critical scholars, the doublets remain. The mere presence of these doublets indicates to me that the Primary History could not have been a Hellenistic era creation "whole cloth", but that the final authors of the biblical text used multiple and parallel sources handed down over the years, at least from the Persian and Exilic periods, or perhaps earlier. I believe the final authors of the Primary text were Hellenistic Jews, but they had earlier sources.

These doublets include intertwined flood accounts (Gen 6:11–9:17), three covenants with Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–27), three deceitful representations of the patriarchal wife as a sister (Gen 12:10–20; 20:1–18; 26:6–11), two expulsions of Hagar (Gen 16:6–14; 21:9–21), gang rape in the village (Gen 19:1–11; Judg 19:14–26), killing the baby boys (Exod 1:15–21; 1:22–2:10), Moses' call to deliver Israel three times (Exod 3:1–4:17; 6:2–8), three versions of the sea crossing (Exod 14:1–31; 15:1–21), complaints and quails in the wilderness (Exod 16:9–26; Num 11:4–34), complaints and water in the wilderness (Exod 17:1–7; Num 20:2–20), golden calf construction (Exod 32:1–6; 1 Kgs 12:28–30), three coronations of Saul (1 Sam 9:1–10:16; 10:17–27; 11:12–15), Samuel and Saul alienated (1 Sam 13:8–15; 15:1–35), David meets Saul for the first time (1 Sam 16:14–23; 17:31–40), David does not kill Saul in the wilderness (1 Sam 24:1–22; 26:1–25), and many revisions and expansions of laws found in Exod 20:23–23:22 by the laws in Deuteronomy 12–26. Critical scholars could adduce others to add to this list, but I include only those I consider to be clear examples and that common sense would consider indisputable (which is to imply that common sense is not always used by biblical commentators). These examples are sufficient in number to conclude that oral or written traditions were available to the final authors of the biblical text.

Conclusion

The texts that I have evaluated do not have doublets. They reasonably could be late Hellenistic creations and insertions into earlier traditions inherited by the biblical authors of the Primary History. This is especially the case to consider when one reads strikingly similar Greek accounts together with these biblical narratives.

The essays in this volume seek to demonstrate that numerous narratives in the Primary History of Genesis through 2 Kings were crafted by authors who were very conversant with Greek and Hellenistic thought. My arguments support general observations of Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thompson of a Hellenistic origin for the Primary History due to its historiographical concerns and the plausibility of being written by Jews only after 300 BCE. By careful and detailed analyses of particular texts that demonstrate the later classical and Hellenistic influence, I have sought to provide undergirding for their arguments. I believe that the suggestions of Lemche and Thompson, especially, deserve attention among biblical scholars, and this collection of writings will serve that purpose. The essays are scattered over a wide range of publications, and their inclusion in one collection provides easier access for critical scholars.

My collection of essays complements other works that have been published in the CIS series. Philippe Wajdenbaum, *Argonauts of the Desert* (Wajdenbaum 2011), has gone through the entire Primary History evaluating numerous texts that appear to demonstrate continuity with Greek literature. His study provides an "avalanche of data" with all of his examples. My works focus more closely on particular texts that might best be described as "classic examples" of the interface with Greek literature, and I work out the similarities in greater detail than Wajdenbaum does with his massive overview. Russell Gmirkin has provided us with a more intense focus on the parallels between the Primary History and the writings of Berossus and Manetho (Gmirkin 2006). Though limiting his attention to these sources enabled him to discuss some issues in greater detail, it also tends to be an overview with close attention to some texts. I complement his work by taking a wider range of Greek literature into account, but then paying attention to those biblical texts that demonstrate the greater affinity for Greek themes. This really responds to those critics who have attacked Gmirkin for not doing a more detailed analysis of many of his texts. Nevertheless, he has done this in his second book, *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible* (Gmirkin 2017). Together our works approach the topic from different, but complementary perspectives. They discuss particular biblical texts and thus fit under the greater rubrics provided by the methodological and general essays found in the collections of papers edited by Thomas L. Thompson and Philippe Wajdenbaum, *The Bible and Hellenism*, from 2014.[2]

Niels Peter Lemche has provided the theoretical foundation and the initial critical observations (Lemche 1993; 2000) upon which we later scholars have built. We have then provided the analysis of specific texts to verify the initial observations of Lemche. It remains for future scholars to probe additional texts, and only time will tell if our avenue of discussion will prove convincing to the majority of

Old Testament scholars in the world or whether it will remain merely the theory of "Scandinavian scholars and friends" (a far less spurious group than "Fox and Friends" in American News).

My contributions over the past twenty years follow the same procedure as the aforementioned scholars. I analyze particular texts in great detail to discover the connection between a biblical narrative and the possible Greek literature that may have inspired it. Apart from Chapters 1 and 7, the essays are arranged in the sequence in which they were published, which basically corresponds to the development of my thought over the years.

The essays in this volume have been slightly revised to include more recent sources and occasional critical observations, especially by the authors that I discuss in Chapter 1.

Notes

1 On this, see Chapter 11 below.
2 For detailed analyses of these works, see Chapter 1 below.

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1 A Hellenistic First Testament?

The views of minimalist scholars[1]

In the past generation there has been a heated discussion among First Testament scholars between those who could be called "maximalists" and others who are termed "minimalists". The debate centers around the historical nature of the biblical testimony in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomist history, with the former affirming the accuracy of the biblical narrative in recalling the events of Israel's past, and the latter viewing most of the biblical narrative as theological fiction generated in the post-exilic period. The debate also addresses the question of when the biblical literature was generated. Some scholars suggest that the Primary History of Genesis through 2 Kings arose gradually in the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic eras until about 400 BCE, others suggest an exilic and post-exilic origin mostly in the Persian period until about 350 BCE, and some scholars stress the Hellenistic era, after 300 BCE, as the time of origin for most or all of the Primary History. This last group of scholars, often Scandinavian or British, referred to as the "Copenhagen School", are truly the "minimalists" in the debate. Suggesting the Hellenistic origin of the Primary History also leads these scholars to deny the validity of the Documentary Hypothesis more or less (depending on the individual scholar).

This article seeks to present the views of six of those leading "minimalist" scholars along with some of the criticisms of their theories and some rebuttal of those criticisms. Hopefully, this summary will present the ideas of these "minimalists" to the American audience where often their views are not fully aired.

Giovanni Garbini

Giovanni Garbini assesses much of Israelite and Jewish history recorded in the Bible in very critical fashion, concluding that what we have primarily in these biblical texts is theological fiction designed to serve the ideological and religious needs of the eras in which the texts were crafted. He suspects that much of the Primary History arose in the second century BCE. He affirms that if early Jewish historians (non-biblical authors) from the fourth through the second century BCE tell a different story than that found in the biblical text, it strongly indicates that the Pentateuch did not yet exist until the second century BCE (Garbini 2003: 27).

When we observe Jewish historians, we note that they tell a different story about Moses than the one found in the biblical text. Hecataeus of Abdera in the late fourth century BCE says that Moses led a colony into Palestine to found Jerusalem, build the temple, and create laws there. Likewise, second and first century BCE Jewish historians Demetrius, Eupolemus, and Artapanus do not seem to know the biblical account of Moses either. Non-Jewish authors like Pompeus Trogus, Strabo, and Tacitus also relate that Moses arrived in Jerusalem. Not until the writings of Philo and Josephus in the first century CE do we discover narratives that concur with the biblical account. The implication is that the Pentateuch was a new creation that emerged only slightly before the translation of the Septuagint in the middle of the second century BCE (Garbini 2003: 60–63). The Septuagint then contained the latest version of the law (Garbini 1988: 146). The Pentateuch deliberately chose to tell the story differently from those accounts wherein Moses arrived in Jerusalem and then created the Temple and the Law. This second century BCE Pentateuch: 1) placed Israelite origins in Mesopotamia with Abraham rather than in Egypt with Moses; 2) reduced Moses to a stutterer to be replaced by Aaron as a speaker, and 3) made Moses die outside the land of Palestine, after a significant new narrative about the exodus experience arose (Garbini 1988: 143, 146; 2003: 70). Furthermore, the "new" Pentateuch manufactured the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, as well as the history of David. The biblical author used some old sources, but mostly created the narratives as fiction (Garbini 2003: 76–77). For example, Joshua is made to appear like the portrayal of Josiah in Chronicles, and the priestly imagery in the portrayal of both men appears to address third and second century BCE Jewish concerns (Garbini 1988: 130–32). Garbini dates Priestly editing of the Pentateuch to this era (Garbini 1988: 146; cf. also Larsson 1983: 408–09). Thus, for Garbini both the Hebrew Pentateuch and the Septuagint translation arose in the second century BCE.

Niels Peter Lemche

Niels Peter Lemche is the leading member of the minimalist Copenhagen School. He is "comrade in arms" with the late Philip Davies (Sheffield) and Thomas Thompson (Copenhagen) in denying the essential historical reality behind the biblical narratives in the Primary History of Genesis through 2 Kings (also Ezra and Nehemiah), as well as maintaining that the Primary History emerges as a literary unity in the Hellenistic era, after 300 BCE.

Niels Peter Lemche believes that the Primary History arose in the Hellenistic era, even though older sources were sometimes used in the generation of the literature. His arguments for such a late date are essentially as follows: 1) Only in the Hellenistic era did Jews develop a concept of historiography that would enable them to create such an extensive corpus of literature. Greek authors, who were the inspiration for this endeavor, were not accessible to Jews prior to the Hellenistic era (Lemche 1993: 184). 2) Much of the biblical material appears to be influenced by Greek historians, especially Herodotus, but also Greek historians of the third and second centuries BCE. He believes this is particularly true of

the Deuteronomistic History (Lemche 2000b: 127–40). Herodotus should be our earliest point of departure for discussing the origins of biblical literature (Lemche 1993: 183; 2001: 221–22), although I would assume Herodotean influence and still suggest Persian period origins for the biblical text in the fourth century BCE. 3) The idea of an Israelite or Jewish kingdom in Palestine, as it is portrayed in the biblical text, did not arise among Jewish intelligentsia and scribes until after 300 BCE. A theocratic Judah could not have been envisioned before the second century BCE. Actual Iron Age Palestine had only disparate city states with no serious unification. Biblical narratives reflect diaspora Jewish values of Persian and Hellenistic times with talk about wandering patriarchs, an exodus, and establishing a kingdom (Lemche 1993: 182–83; 2001: 217). 4) The Persian period appears to have been a time of little cultural achievement, hardly a time to produce great literature. Suggesting the Persian period as the fertile time of text production, when we know far too little about this era, is like assuming a closed "black box" in which all the answers are to be found, but the box cannot be opened (Lemche 1993: 184–87). 5) In general, most of the narratives in the Primary History have no reliable historical substance behind them, which implies that most of the narratives are a later fictionalizing of what few sources they might have had. There are some historical memories in the Primary History, but they symbolically allude to other events. Thus, Israelite slaves working in the cities of Pithom and Ramses (Exod 1:11) may refer to Necho's use of Jewish slaves after 609 BCE. Joshua's conquest of the tribal areas of Benjamin may recall pastoral movements of a tribe called Benjamin down from north Mesopotamia. The accounts about David and Solomon in 1 Samuel through 1 Kings may be veiled memories of the accomplishments of Omri and Ahab in northern Israel in 1 Kings (Lemche 1994: 174–87). Lemche pointedly says that the Hebrew texts could only be ten to a hundred years older than the Septuagint (Lemche 1993: 189). He suggests that the Primary History arose in the city of Seleucia, which replaced Babylon as the important city in the Hellenistic era (Lemche 2001: 223–24), or perhaps in Alexandria in Egypt (Lemche 2011: 92). The Hebrew text is theological fiction with a significant religious message, and Christian theologians and biblical scholars need to observe the message rather than be obsessed with creating an artificial history off of the biblical narratives, along with the skewed use of archaeological information, that selectively eliminates the miraculous in order to make the biblical narratives seem historical. Religious truth does not come from history but from the fictional theological narratives. The Hebrew text is created primarily in unified form after 300 BCE from a few historical sources, so that essentially the Documentary Hypothesis is an untenable theory (Lemche 2000a; 2008).

Lemche locates the time for the emergence of this literature as the second century BCE. He sees no evidence for a Hebrew text prior to 200 BCE. Only after 200 BCE is Palestinian society sophisticated enough to produce such literature, and only the Dead Sea Scrolls from the middle of the second century BCE provide evidence of a literary tradition for the biblical books. One should date literature by the youngest material in a text (Lemche 2011: 77; 2001: 218–19). Perhaps the Pentateuch might be as early as the third century BCE, but it could not have

originated in Palestine (Lemche 2011: 92). Sources older than that may have been available to the biblical authors, but they were limited in scope (Lemche 2011).

In Lemche's view biblical authors intellectually created a history by writing backwards and building on the institutions of their own age. They fictionalized a past to comment upon the present era in which they lived. They recalled a cultural memory, not an actual history (Lemche 2015). The biblical authors created a monotheistic history out of a polytheistic past in order to speak to their present time. They suggested the existence of an amphictyonic league in order to criticize the Hasmonean kings of a later era (Lemche 2015: 26–28). Biblical authors may actually be speaking to the politics of the Maccabean or Hasmonean age in the second century BCE. Lemche suggests that the exodus traditions may be a direct response to Manetho's negative portrayal of Jews (Lemche 2008: 131–32). Some of the prophetic oracles could be describing a Jewish diaspora in Egypt in the third and second centuries BCE (Lemche 2008: 228–30). Thus, many biblical texts might be best explained by the social and religious needs of Jews in the Hellenistic era.

Lemche has received significant critique from various scholars. Rainer Albertz states the following: 1) Cultural sophistication is not a pre-condition for literary publication, more likely a social crisis, like the sixth century BCE Babylonian Exile, will lead people to preserve traditions in written form, lest they be lost. 2) Hellenistic culture threatened the national identity of the Jews, it did not provide a fertile soil for growth of literature. 3) The Hellenistic period was not the first climax for intellectual development for the Jews; the first climax was the economic and social development in the eighth century BCE. 4) Albertz also notes that Lemche has not elaborated his ideas in sufficient detail to create a cogent theory, especially lacking is a social-historical paradigm into which the message of the literature would fit in the Hellenistic era. 5) Finally, Hecataeus knows the Pentateuch in 300 BCE (Albertz 2001: 31–41).

In defense of Lemche, I would respond to Albertz's arguments: The sixth century BCE crisis may have generated the earliest written traditions, but the Hellenistic era may have provided the intellectual agenda to produce the grand national epic, as well as some additional narratives. Hellenistic culture had a varied impact upon Jews in different parts of the world, perhaps threatening in Palestine, but inspiring in Alexandria, where Hellenistic influence enabled Jews to craft works like the later Wisdom of Solomon and some of the writings in the Pseudepigrapha. The overall cultural atmosphere of the Hellenistic era is the social cultural setting, one need not be more specific than this. Being more specific, as Albertz demands, is often being too speculative. Perhaps, Hecataeus knew more of what Jews in his age believed and practiced rather than being conversant with literary texts. However, my response is not a definitive refutation of Albertz; his observations are good and deserve a response from minimalists.

Other scholars likewise have criticized Lemche. Hans Barstad observes how the Deuteronomistic History resonates the thought of the pre-exilic ancient Near East with its theology and language, and shows no awareness of Hellenistic intellectual issues (Barstad 2001). In particular, the biblical preoccupation with so

many specific deities, by name, would not be typical of Hellenistic Jewish thought that would condemn polytheism in general (Bardstad 2001: 68). Bob Becking notes that the Hebrew Bible lacks concern with issues of purity and impurity, which would be hallmark topics for Hellenistic Jews (Becking 2001: 86). David Gunn notes that Lemche seeks to date the text by its youngest elements, but what if a text is composite, containing older elements, something which Lemche does admit occurs, then it would be inappropriate to speak of the Primary History as a total Hellenistic creation (Gunn 2001: 189).

I would observe that upon taking these critiques into account, a more detailed evaluation of the evolution of the biblical text is needed from Lemche or someone, a theory that suggests how the final stages of development of the biblical text emerge in the Hellenistic period. But Lemche's observations have been seminal in initiating the entire discussion of Hellenistic origins.

Thomas L. Thompson

Thomas Thompson's views are quite similar to those of Niels Peter Lemche. He believes that Jewish historiography could only arise in the Hellenistic age. Like Lemche he suggests the second century BCE as the time for such literature to be created. There were prior sources, but not very many, so that most of the narratives are fiction. Old traditions used by the biblical author might have included: 1) Prayers in Leviticus, 2) genealogies of Shem and Ham, 3) the Balaam narratives, 4) dynastic lists from Omri onward in the northern state of Israel, 5) the memory of Samaria's destruction, 6) old psalms, like Psalm 89, 7) the garden story in Genesis 3, and 8) the flood narrative (Thompson 1999b: 295).

Much of the material in the biblical text can be explained by reference to events in the Hellenistic era. Thus, a few examples can be given. Deut 5:6 refers to Jews who went down to Egypt in the third century BCE. The wandering of Abraham is inspired by the stories of the wandering of Aeneas, for both create great new settlements. Ahab is a symbol for Antiochus IV Epiphanes. David and Josiah are allegories for the Maccabean ruler John Hyrcanus, Solomon symbolizes Alexander the Great, and Hezekiah also foreshadows John Hyrcanus (Thompson 1999b: 66, 77–78, 207–08, 273). Thompson believes that narratives in the Dead Sea Scrolls, such as 4QTestamonia and 4Q158, actually inspired the biblical narratives in Numbers and Deuteronomy (Thompson 1999b: 275–78).

In particular, Thompson sees the year 164 BCE as a crucial date for the creation of the text, because the biblical chronology for the entire Pentateuch seems to imply that 164 BCE is the four thousandth anniversary of the founding of the world. It is also the year when the Temple was rededicated and purified after Seleucid rule (Thompson 1999b: 73–75, 294). After 164 BCE there are minor revisions to the biblical text.

For Thompson the Bible is not history but theology. One of its chief themes is the interplay between the creative and the destructive power of the spirit (Thompson 1999a: 258–93). Since Thompson's theory is similar to Lemche's, the criticisms and counter response would be much the same, so we need not go

into detail at this point. Both Lemche and Thompson agree that there were sources prior to the Hellenistic era that were used by the authors who crafted the final form of the biblical text, but they assume that such sources were not extensive nor well organized. The next three scholars that we shall review affirm that the Primary History is completely a creation generated in the Hellenistic era with no real prior sources.

Russell Gmirkin

Russell Gmirkin believes that both the Hebrew Primary History and the Greek Septuagint were produced by the same people in the same era at the library in Alexandria. He uses the references in the genealogies of Genesis 10 to establish the historical era in which this Hebrew text would have arisen, and he locates its creation about 273–272 BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 1). He further believes that monotheism is not promulgated among Jews in a consistent form until these texts are created (Gmirkin 2017: 261–62). His approach to developing his thesis is well organized.

He first observes that there appear to be no true references to the Pentateuch prior to 300 BCE. The written finds at the Jewish colony of Elephantine show no awareness of Pentateuchal stories or customs in the 400s BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 28–33). The supposed reference to the Pentateuch and Jewish laws from Hecataeus of Abdera's *Aegyptica* dated to 320–300 BCE actually does not come from him. Many scholars appeal to that reference to maintain the Primary History arose before the Hellenistic era. The references of Hecataeus are preserved in Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 40.3.1–8, but Gmirkin painstakingly demonstrates that Diodorus Siculus is really using Theophanes of Mytilene's writings from 62 BCE. Only Theophanes would have had the first-hand awareness of Jerusalem implied by the passages, for Theophanes was the biographer for Pompey when the latter entered Jerusalem in 63 BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 34–71; 2014: 61–83). The negative portrayal of the Jews fits the views of Theophanes, not Hecataeus of Abdera (Gmirkin 2006: 45–49). The excerpts say that Jews had no images of the gods, but Greeks did not have that knowledge until Pompey went into the Temple (Gmirkin 2006: 50–52; 2014: 74, 81). The expression "Jews never had a king" comes from Theophanes and justifies Pompey's termination of Hasmonean kingship (Gmirkin 2006: 54–55). If we then exclude the testimony of Hecataeus of Abdera, only the Septuagint shows the first true awareness of the Pentateuch (Gmirkin 2006: 2). Gmirkin has defended this particular issue in detail against a number of critical responses (Gmirkin 2014: 56–88).

There was no prior Greek translation of the Hebrew before the Septuagint. Aristobulus (second century BCE) thought there was such a translation, but he only inferred this from other observations of Hecataeus. The *Letter of Aristeas* (second century BCE) implies an earlier Greek translation, but it was written by Aristobulus (Gmirkin 2006: 76–88).

Gmirkin spends much effort to prove that the biblical texts in Genesis 1–11 were inspired by Berossus' *Babyloniaca* (278 BCE), for Berossus had made the

cuneiform myths and stories from Mesopotamia available to the west semitic world in Greek form, and particularly for the biblical authors (Gmirkin 2006: 3, 7, 91–139). Otherwise, biblical authors would not have had access to cuneiform texts. Furthermore, his comparison of the texts seeks to demonstrate how the biblical version of the primeval history is very close to Berossus, more so than to the Mesopotamian texts. There is great similarity between Genesis 1, Berossus, and the *Enuma Elish*, but only Genesis 1 and Berossus mention the creation of animals. Gmirkin asks why is Genesis 1 like Berossus and the *Enuma Elish*, when there are other Babylonian creation accounts? The biblical authors knew only the *Enuma Elish* because that is what Berossus recorded (Gmirkin 2006: 91–94). The story of the garden could have come to the biblical author from Mesopotamia only through Berossus, and Oannes, the proto-type for the serpent is found only in Berossus (Gmirkin 2006: 100–07). According to Berossus, Enmeduranki was the seventh pre-diluvian figure, as in the Bible, but other Babylonian stories rank him sixth or eighth (Gmirkin 2006: 109). The biblical account of the flood has very close parallels with the *Gilgamesh Epic*, and Berossus, who uses the *Gilgamesh Epic* (Gmirkin 2006: 111–13). Gmirkin demonstrates how the story of Nimrod reflects the version of Berossus, not the version from *Persica* by Ktesis, as many claim (Gmirkin 2006: 114–17). The Babel account comes from the *Poem of Erra* (seventh century BCE) by way of Berossus (Gmirkin 2006: 124–33). Genesis 1–11 and Berossus share accounts about: 1) creation, 2) the origin of the arts, 3) ten rulers of the pre-flood world, 4) a flood hero, 5) the flood, and 6) rebuilding Babylon (Babel) (Gmirkin 2006: 135).

Gmirkin then discusses how the biblical author crafted the narrative of the Exodus from the writings of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* (285–280 BCE). Manetho's critical interpretation of the Jewish presence in Egypt shows no awareness of the biblical narratives, but rather uses native Egyptian traditions. Manetho wrote before the time of the Septuagint and he did not read Hebrew (Gmirkin 2006: 187). Manetho describes the expulsion of foreigners from Egypt into Judea. The Hyksos have nothing to do with the Jews. But Gmirkin seeks to demonstrate that the biblical account of the Exodus is really designed to counter the vile propaganda of Manetho about Jews, and when Manetho's observations are not critical of the Jews, the biblical text concurs with his summary (Gmirkin 2006: 171; 2017: 226–27). The biblical author reverses the Hyksos enslavement of the Egyptians to become the Egyptian enslavement of Israel. The reference to 600,000 Israelites leaving Egypt reflects Manetho's reference to 240,000 shepherds coming into Egypt (Gmirkin 2006: 172–84). The biblical author deliberately reverses Manetho's accounts as a polemic against him: 1) Jews entered peacefully, not as invaders, 2) Jews were enslaved, they did not conquer, 3) Egyptians killed Jews, not the reverse, 4) Jews escaped, they were not driven out (Gmirkin 2006: 188–91). Manetho's second account of Jews as lepers polluting Egypt really drew from Egyptian traditions. The lepers refer to devotees of the Egyptian god Seth during the Nineteenth Dynasty. Manetho, however, did connect Osarseph, leader of the lepers, with Moses superficially. But the biblical author turned Osarseph into Joseph to disconnect him from Moses, and the allusions to the leprosy of

Moses and Miriam in the biblical text indicate that leprosy was really infrequent among the Jews (Gmirkin 2006: 192–212).

Gmirkin's careful consideration of the genealogies in Genesis 10 observes that the Table of Nations describes the relationship of Seleucid, Ptolemaic, and independent regions after 278 BCE during the Wars of the Successors (278–246 BCE), and the Curse on Canaan reflects the political circumstances after the First Syrian War in 273–272 BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 140–69). Hence, he locates the creation of the Hebrew text in this era. Shem represents the Seleucid Empire of Lydia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and at no other time did Seleucid territories correspond to the biblical personages. The sons of Japhet are those areas that were somewhat independent from Seleucid rule in 278–269 BCE. The sons of Javan are areas of naval interest for Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II in 273–269 BCE. Sons of Ham represent the Ptolemaic Empire and areas they claimed to rule (Gmirkin 2006: 146–63). The Curse on Canaan reflects Ptolemaic rule in Palestine, and it contains the hope that the Seleucids (Shem) would replace Ptolemaic rule there, when Japhet would dwell in the tents of Shem (Gmirkin 2006: 163–69). (Much of this last argument appears rather forced to me.)

The figure of Moses appears to have been inspired by the last pharaoh of Egypt, Nectanebos II, who was romantically portrayed in Egyptian legends as a savior of the Egyptians from the Persians and as a magician, both attributes of Moses. Nectanebos II failed to deliver Egyptians from Persians, but Moses succeeded in saving Jews from Egyptians. Both personages tried to drown their enemies (Gmirkin 2006: 215–21). Furthermore, the place names in the account of the Exodus flight from Egypt reflect place names in the early Ptolemaic period, the early third century BCE, and the crossing of the sea may allude to geographic features connected to the canal that ran from the Ptolemaic Nile to the Red Sea, which was in place by 273 BCE. The water went from the Nile to the Pithom canal. The walls of water for Moses and pharaoh reflect the swelling water level in the locks that allowed ships to pass (Gmirkin 2006: 222–39). Ptolemy II transformed the Bitter Lakes into sweet water by his lock system, just as Moses did with the water at Marah (Gmirkin 2006: 238). The speech of Moses in Deuteronomy 1–9, replete with the laws in Deuteronomy 12–26, is parallel to the speeches and legislation given by Greek leaders as they guide Greek colonists to new settlements (Gmirkin 2017: 250).

Thus, Gmirkin marshalls a significant amount of information to locate the date of the creation of the Hebrew text in a particular age. He then assumes that the Septuagint was translated about that same time as the *Letter of Aristeas* implies. One could hold to Gmirkin's theory about the origin of the Hebrew Pentateuch but suggest a much later date and gradual evolution for the Septuagint, as I do. Nonetheless, Gmirkin believes that the Hebrew Pentateuch and the Septuagint were produced together in Alexandria, both at the request of Ptolemy II in the third century BCE (Gmirkin 2006: 252–56; 2017: 1).

A special concern of Gmirkin is to establish a strong connection between biblical laws and Greek laws, especially Athenian laws and the laws in Plato's writings. He addresses this issue in a single monograph. In a detailed three-way

comparison of biblical, ancient Near Eastern, and Greek laws, Gmirkin observes that the biblical text shows a strong affinity to both ancient Near Eastern and Greek laws. In this comparison, however, Gmirkin notes how biblical laws often show far greater similarity with the Greek laws, especially those found in Plato's *Laws*, on issues such as murder, sex laws, some slavery laws, military law, treason, and sacred law (Gmirkin 2017: 77–86, 98–111, 123–39). However, it is significant that Gmirkin does admit biblical and ancient Near Eastern laws are more similar to each other on issues of assault, theft, marriage, social laws, livestock laws, agricultural laws, and commercial laws (Gmirkin 2017: 86–98, 111–23). So this is a complex issue for discussion, and I do not believe Gmirkin has a totally convincing argument on the laws. In terms of the overall structure and purpose of lawcodes, biblical and Greek codes share more in common with each other than with ancient Near Eastern codes, especially with the lack of a sponsoring king (Gmirkin 2017: 183–206). Furthermore, biblical and Greek law codes are presented in the context of a narrative, often the story of a migration and founding of a new city/country (Gmirkin 2017: 220–34). In general, a basic comparison of biblical and Greek laws alone reveals similarities in terms of the assumption of egalitarianism, lack of kings, citizen armies, comparable land distributions, kinship and household structures, deliberative bodies, judiciaries, magistrates, and even the portrayal of military heroes (such as David) (Gmirkin 2017: 26–28, 145–46). Gmirkin, of course, assumes that the biblical authors would have had access to the laws of Athens and Plato's *Laws* in the great library of Alexandria, where they created both the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint translation within the same generation.

Gmirkin's theories are detailed and well argued. Scholars who oppose minimalist theories and a Hellenistic origin for the Hebrew text must come to grips with his many observations.

John Van Seters has critiqued Gmirkin with some substantive observations (Van Seters 2008: 212–14). He accuses Gmirkin of providing no critical analysis of biblical texts, but merely giving random selections of narratives which observe similarities but ignore differences between the Bible and the Greek historians. He chides Gmirkin for suggesting that some parallels between Berossus and the Bible once existed but have been lost to us (other short reviews speak similarly). Gmirkin ignores parallels between the biblical text and cuneiform sources, such as the Sargon Legend and Moses, and in turn Gmirkin only offers a few parts of the Pentateuch for comparison. These critiques are valid and quite significant.

Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano

Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano proposes that the Primary History arose in the Hellenistic era, after 200 BCE. He suggests that the literature arose as a result of the Hasmonean or Maccabean rule in the second century BCE, for only the authority of an organized monarchy could effectively inspire such a work and assure that it would be accepted by the Jewish intelligentsia and people as a whole. Furthermore, he opines that the literature may have arisen in response to

the emergence of the Samaritan traditions in Shechem. Thus, the Primary History focuses upon Jerusalem as the true center. His study of narratives about shrines in the historical literature observes that there is a tendency to select shrines close to Jerusalem or to artificially locate them close to Jerusalem as a response to the beliefs of the Samaritans in the north.

His most significant work is a monograph about the biblical traditions connected to various shrines, *Origin Myths and Holy Places in the Old Testament* (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011). He focuses upon stories about shrines in Beersheba, Bethel, Dan, Hebron (Mamre), Ophrah, Shechem, Gilgal, Penuel, Gadeel, and Manahaim to discern how the mythic traditions connected to these shrines grew over the years. He summarizes how critical scholarship has hypothesized various dates for the stages of evolution in these traditions, and he accepts that traditions about these shrines could be very old and were handed down in fragmentary fashion. But ultimately these biblical narratives, in his opinion, took their final form under second-century BCE Hasmonean scribes. He suggests how the final form of the story and its message makes sense in the Maccabean era, especially with the hints in the accounts that imply the value of unified royal rule over the land. Such unified royal rule never occurred in the pre-exilic or post-exilic era until the second century BCE. (He, of course, discounts the historicity of accounts connected to David and Solomon.) When he discusses how the biblical narratives and their theological message best fit the second century BCE, he says very little. Ultimately, though his arguments are coherent, his thesis is very suggestive and lacks detailed arguments for second century BCE dates for all these texts. Sometimes his arguments for second century BCE dates are painfully brief. His monograph has value when placed together with the writings of other scholars who argue for a Hellenistic origin of the biblical text.

In brief, this is what he says about the second century BCE message found in the traditions of those various shrines:

Beersheba would have become important to biblical authors only in the second century BCE when Maccabean rule extended to that area under John Hyrcanus after 164 BCE (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 54–57, 248–49, 251–52).

A critical attitude toward Bethel would have been necessary for the author of Genesis in the second century BCE because there were rival priests in that shrine during the Maccabean era (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 90).

Dan is a shrine whose founding is recounted in Judges 18. This chapter is missing from the book of Judges found in the second century BCE text from Qumran, implying that the narrative is generated in the second century BCE. The Maccabean conquest of Galilee under John Hyrcanus (135–104 BCE) would be the time when this shrine assumed importance for biblical authors (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 105–09, 251–52).

Mamre would become meaningful under the Maccabeans for the sake of legitimating the Jewishness of the Hebron era after its conquest by John Hyrcanus. The oldest archaeological artifacts at Mamre or Hebron only date to the second century BCE (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 131, 248–49, 251–52).

The place name Ophrah comes into existence only in the first century CE, thus implying this material is very late. The name Ephrathah was changed to Ophrah only after the separation of the Massoretic tradition from the Septuagint tradition (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 171, 244).

The stories about Shechem, especially Joshua 24, emerge only in the Hellenistic era and reflect rising tensions between Jews and Samaritans. The Shechem traditions solidify only in the second century BCE because the stories about Joshua's conquests reflect Maccabean conquests. The significance of the shrine needed to be minimized in the second century BCE because of the Samaritans in the north (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 199, 203, 245).

Gilgal traditions about the conquest of that city by Joshua really reflect Maccabean conquests in the second century BCE (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 212).

Penuel, Gadeel, and Manahaim, all Transjordanian sites, become meaningful places for Jews only once they rule this land under the guidance of the Maccabees (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 252).

Thus, all the shrine stories make sense as a unified narrative only in the period of 160–100 BCE, for only then did Jews rule the territory in which all of these shrines are found (Niesiolowski-Spano 2011: 256). Of course, this argument assumes that the historicity of the United Monarchy and much of the Divided Monarchy is suspect, an assumption of the school of thought out of which Niesiolowski-Spano comes. Thus, he relies heavily upon the scholarship of other minimalist scholars and he makes no original arguments to discredit the possibility that another era other than the second century BCE could be a time in which Jews had control of the land in which these shrines are located.

His article, "Primeval History in the Persian Period?" (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007), provides insight from another perspective. He evaluates Genesis 1–11 and discerns that it really originates in the Hellenistic era after 300 BCE, not the Persian period, and reflects influence from the writings of Plato. He observes how references to these chapters do not occur in the rest of the Bible, except in Chronicles and other late, second century BCE writings. In fact, in the second century BCE author, Aristobulos, there are frequent references to passages in the Pentateuch, but none to Genesis 1–11 (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 109). Ezekiel's allusions to the garden of Eden and the man in that garden on the mountain probably inspired the accounts in Genesis 1–3 (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 112–13). In general, motifs from the Primeval History occur only in Jewish Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha (like Enoch), and the New Testament, indicating a second century BCE origin for the Primeval History (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 113–14, 125 presents a detailed chart).

Mythic images in the Primeval History come from Plato. These include: 1) a self-moving being creates the world, 2) humans are made in the image of God, 3) humans include both male and female, 4) humans are meant to dominate other creatures, 5) woman is responsible for the fall, 6) the Tree of Knowledge, and 7) possession of wisdom as the reason for the fall (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 117). (I believe his derivation of these themes from Plato's dialogues results from his very generous and loose reading of Plato). Plato died in 347 BCE and his writings

would have become available to Jewish intelligentsia by the third century BCE, which would make the second century BCE emergence of the Primeval History a viable theory (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 124). Thus, Niesiolowski-Spano consistently points to the second century BCE as the logical era for the ultimate emergence of the Primary History in its final form.

Philippe Wajdenbaum

Philippe Wajdenbaum provides the most detailed evaluation of Hellenistic influence in the First Testament. He goes through the entire Primary History focusing upon those narratives that appear to have parallels in the Greek mythic and historiographical tradition as well as narratives that appear to have been influenced by Greek narratives, even in a slight way. His study is thorough to the point of being overwhelming, and to the point of being described as an "avalanche" of data. Even if he is correct in his evaluations only part of the time, he has presented a significant number of examples that cannot be easily dismissed by critics. He affirms that there are so many examples of parallels between Greek literature and the First Testament, that it is more logical to assume that the biblical author knew Greek literature rather than assuming that so many Greek authors knew biblical materials (Wajdenbaum 2011: 15). Only the overwhelming cultural challenge of Hellenism after 300 BCE could have created the desire to generate the Hebrew text of the Primary History (Wajdenbaum 2010: 41).

His central thesis is that old traditions were used by a single Jewish scribe after 200 BCE to create the Primary History. There are no JEDP sources behind our biblical text, only Greek literary texts and fragments of Jewish legends (Wajdenbaum 2011: 27). This scribe was deeply steeped in Greek literature, especially the writings of Plato, including first and foremost Plato's *Laws*. As he creatively crafted the Primary History, he often used individual narratives to create biblical stories and sometimes he drew together images from several Greek stories to generate a particular biblical account (Wadjenbaum 2011: 13–14). He further maintains that the same scribe who wrote Genesis through 2 Kings also created the book of Esther (Wadjenbaum 2011: 288–96). This scribe was a hellenizing Jew working in the Library of Alexandria during the time of the Hasmoneans. Because of its origin in Egypt, this Hebrew literary work was quickly translated into the Greek Septuagint in Egypt also. Crafting the Primary History as a nine-volume work reflects the author's imitation of Herodotus, whose *Histories* are also in nine volumes (Wajdenbaum 2011: 288). By dating the creation of the Primary History to the second century BCE, Wajdenbaum also assumes that the translation of the Septuagint is to be dated to the second rather than the third century BCE, as the *Letter of Aristeas* claims. Only the Hasmonean state in the second century BCE would have had the authority to promote an authoritative Hebrew text created in Egypt (Wajdenbaum 2011: 28–29, 304–05).

It would be tedious to list all the examples of Greek influence offered by Wajdenbaum, but some of the significant parallels deserve mention. I apologize for the length of the list, but it is important to realize how much can be offered

by way of testimony to the Greek connections with the Bible. Sometimes he believes that the Greek story influenced the creation of the biblical account, at other times he suggests that the Greek story simply influenced part of the narrative plot.

Both Plato's *Laws* and the book of Genesis narrate how there was a flood, followed by references to the lives of ancient people after the flood, then the creation of many cities, followed by the giving of laws (Sinai), and finally the creation of the Ideal State (conquest under Joshua) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 69, 106–07).

Alcmaeon kills his mother and must become a wanderer (Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* II, 102), just as Cain kills Abel and wanders the earth (Gen 4:1–16) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 104).

In Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, divine human matings are recounted, just as in Gen 6:1–4 (Wajdenbaum 2011: 102–03).

As Noah has three sons and their descendants are listed in Genesis 10, Herodotus (*Histories* IV, 45) divides the world into three continents (Asia, Libya, and Europa) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 108–09).

Iapetos is the grandfather of Deucalion, the flood hero (Pindar, *Olympian* IX, 40–56), just as Japhet is the son of Noah (Gen 9:18), in a commonly occurring genealogical displacement (Wajdenbaum 2011: 105).

In Hesiod (*Theogony* 1175–1180), Kronos castrates his father as Ham sees Noah naked (Gen 9:20–27) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 107–08).

When Japhet expands and dwells in the tents of Shem (Gen 9:27), it previsages the Hellenistic conquest of Asia (Wajdenbaum 2011: 105).

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* I, 150–170, giants pile up mountains to storm the heavens, but Zeus stops this by hurling lightning bolts to destroy the mountains. The story of Babel in Genesis 11 is similar, but without the lightning bolts (Wajdenbaum 2011: 111).

In the *Critias* 116c–117a, Plato portrays the fall of Atlantis as foreshadowing the fall of Athens, just as the biblical author in Genesis 11 has Babel foreshadow the fall of Jerusalem (Wajdenbaum 2011: 112).

In Herodotus, *Histories* V, 39–41, the wife of Anaxandrides is barren, so he takes a second wife, but then the first wife becomes pregnant, so that he has several children. This is closely comparable to how Abraham takes Hagar as a surrogate wife when Sarah is barren (Gen 16:1–6) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 114).

In Ovid, *Fasti*, V, 495–545, Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury promise an old widower, named Hyrieus, a son, just as the angel messengers promise a son to Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1–15) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 115–16) (cf. Gnuse 2017b).

In Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 620–725, Jupiter and Mercury save Philemon and Baucis from the great flood, just as the angels save Lot and his family from the fire that descends upon the cities of the plain (Gen 19:14–26) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 117–18) (cf. Gnuse 2017b).

In Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X, 45–50, Orpheus tries to bring Eurydice out of Hades, but when she looks back, she is trapped, just as Lot's wife looks back and turns into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:24–26) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 118–19).

In Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X, 430–475, Myrrha, daughter of king Cinyras of Crete, has sex with her father, just as Lot's daughters seduce him (Gen 19:30–38) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 119).

Athamas, king of Boetia, almost sacrifices his son, Phrixos, to Zeus for the sake of land fertility due to a false oracle, when a winged ram with a golden fleece, given by Nephele, carries Phrixos safely to Colchis. In thankfulness, Phrixos sacrifices the ram and hangs its golden fleece on an oak (anticipating Jason's recovery of it years later) (Apollodorus, *Library* I, 9, 1; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* II, 1190–1195). This is similar to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac that is stopped by the voice of God and the appearance of a ram in the thicket (Gen 22:11–14) (Wajdenbaum 2010: 132; 2011: 18, 120–21).

Abas and his wife Aglaia have twin sons, Acrisius and Proetus, who fight with each other in the womb (Apollodorus, *Library* 2, 2, 1), as do Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:22–23) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 123).

As Thespius tricks Hercules into having sex with his fifty daughters (Apollodorus, *Library*, 2, 4, 10), so Laban tricks Jacob in marrying both Leah and Rachel (Gen 29:21–27) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 127).

As Helen is kidnapped (Apollodorus, *Library*, 3, 10, 7), so also is Dinah (Gen 34:1–31), and as a result two cities are destroyed (Wajdenbaum 2011: 129–30).

Xerses seduces his daughter-in-law and is caught because she possesses his robe afterward (Herodotus, *Histories* IX, 108–110), just as Tamar seduces Judah and saves her life by producing his signet, cord, and staff, and she is destined to be his daughter-in-law (Gen 38:13–26) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 133).

Odysseus goes to Egypt and is pharaoh's friend for seven years and then in prison for seven years (Homer, *Odyssey* XIX, 340–345). Joseph is at first in prison and then in pharaoh's court, and the number seven occurs as years of plenty followed by famine (Genesis 40–41) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 138–39).

As the king of Ethiopia accuses the envoys of Cambyses of being spies (Herodotus, *Histories* III, 20–21), so Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies (Gen 42:8–17) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 142–43).

Aesop has a sacred cup planted in his luggage for which the Delphians catch and execute him (Scholiast of Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1446; Herodotus, *Histories* II, 134), just as Joseph plants coins and a silver cup in Benjamin's sack (Gen 44:1–34) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 143).

As both Odysseus and Joseph reveal their identities, there is a similar narrative sequence: 1) revelation of identity, 2) friend or brother grabs his neck, 3) they embrace, 4) they kiss, and 5) they weep (Homer, *Odyssey*, XXI, 200–10; Gen 45:2–3, 14–15) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 140).

When Odysseus and Joseph see their father, they fall on his neck and weep (Homer, *Odyssey* XXIV, 315–350; Gen 46:29) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 140–41).

Odysseus kills the suitors with a bow and arrow (Homer, *Odyssey* XXII, 70–72), just as Joseph is compared to an archer (Gen 49:22–24) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 142).

Herodotus, *Histories* II, 124, tells how Cheops forces his people to build pyramids, like pharaoh forces Israelites to build for him (Exod 1:7–14) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 146).

Alcmene exposes her baby, Athena finds it, Hera tries to nurse, but Athena takes it to Alcmene to raise (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* IV, 9, 6–7). Likewise, Moses is exposed by his parents, guarded by Miriam, found by pharaoh's daughter, and then finally nursed by his own mother (Exod 2:1–10) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 148).

Hercules rescues the seven daughters of Atlas and Hesperides who were drawing water (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* IV, 27), just as Moses defends the seven daughters of the priest of Midian who were drawing water (Exod 2:16–21) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 149).

Hesiod is called to be a poet while he is a shepherd (Hesiod, *Theogony* 24–35), as Moses is called while tending the sheep (Exod 3:1–12) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 150).

Cyrene in Libya is founded by Battus, who stutters (like Moses did in Exod 4:10), and leads people to a land promised to their ancestor, Euphemos, the Argonaut (Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 145–159), just as Moses leads the Israelites to a land promised to the patriarchal ancestors. Both rule for forty years either in Libya or the wilderness (Wajdenbaum 2010: 133–34; 2011: 72, 113, 151).

According to Herodotus, *Histories* II, 119, Menelaus keeps his wife in Egypt during the Trojan war, so that after Troy falls, he picks her up along with all his wealth. This reminds us of Abram and Sarai in Egypt (Gen 12:10–20) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 152–53).

Theoclymenus of Egypt wants to marry Helen, but Castor and Pollux appear and tell him that she is married (Euripides, *Helen* 1650–1660), just as God appears to Abimelech to tell him that Abraham and Sarah are married (Gen 20:1–18) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 154).

Herodotus, *Histories* VIII, 129, tells of how high tide kills Persians trying to cross to Pallene, just as the Egyptians are drowned while chasing the Israelites in Exodus 14–15 (Wajdenbaum 2011: 157–58).

Plato's allegory of the cave in *Republic* XII tells of how people resist coming to the light as they leave the "cave" of ignorance, just as the Israelites murmur in the wilderness on their way to the promised land (Exod 14:11–12; 17:2–4) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 158–59, 169).

Spies from Cyrus go to Syria and Libya and their news frightens the soldiers (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* VI, 2, 9–13), just as the twelve spies investigate Canaan and their news frightens the Israelites (Num 13:26–33) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 180–81).

Zeus throws Amphiarus into the underworld (Euripides, *Suppliants* 927), just as Korah disappears into the underworld (Num 16:31–33) (Wadjenbaum 2011: 182).

Asclepius tells the king of Rome to look upon a snake wrapped around a staff during a plague (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XV, 650–660), just as Moses puts the bronze serpent on a pole before the Israelites to protect them from snakes (Num 21:8–9) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 184).

The horses of Achilles warn him of his impending death (Homer, *Iliad* XIX, 400–420), as the donkey of Balaam warns him of his potential death at the hands of the angel (Num 21:8–9) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 184–87) (cf. Gnuse 2017d).

Athena appears to Odysseus, and though Telemachus cannot see her, the dogs can (Homer, *Odyssey* XVI, 162). Similarly, Balaam cannot see the angel, but his donkey can (Num 22:22–30) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 186).

Lemnina women kill their husbands and then seduce Jason's argonauts (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1, 845–875), just as Phineas kills the Israelites who have slept with Moabite women (Num 25:1–13) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 187–89).

Greek daughters may receive land from their deceased fathers if they marry kinfolk (Plato, *Laws* 924c–e), just as the daughters of Zelophehad are enabled to receive their father's inheritance (Num 27:1–11) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 190–92).

Plato's Ideal State has twelve parts (Plato, *Laws* 745b–c), like the twelve tribes receive apportioned land in Num 26:51–56. Plato's *Critias* tells how an Ideal State collapses because it fails to follow its own laws, just as the Deuteronomistic History tells the same story (Wajdenbaum 2010: 135–36; 2011: 73, 189).

Antenor and Theano hide Menelaus and Odysseus who come to Troy as spies and negotiate with them for their survival. For the invading Acheans to recognize their house, a leopard skin is attached to the window (Homer, *Iliad* III, 200–225; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 10, 27, 2). Similarly, the spies in Jericho are hidden by Rahab, who negotiates her own safety when the city falls, and she protects her home by placing a crimson thread in the window (Josh 6:22–23) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 207–09).

Agamemnon prays for the sun not to go down until Troy falls (Homer, *Iliad* II, 410–420), as Joshua does during his battle (Josh 10:12–14) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 209–10).

Atossa sadly awaits the return of her son, Xerses, after his defeat by the Greeks (Euripides, *Persians* 832–833), as Sisera's mother awaits his return after his death (Judg 5:28–30) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 216–17).

Leonidas fights with three hundred Spartans (Herodotus, *Histories* VII, 205–207, 220), as Gideon fights with three hundred men (Judg 7:1–8, 20–22), and both undertake a night attack in which their confused enemies kill each other (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* XI, 10; Judg 7:20–22) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 217–18).

Iphigenia is sacrificed by her father for the sake of military success in the future (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*), just as Jephthah sacrifices his daughter after military victory (Judg 11:31–49) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 222).

Samson appears to be paradigmed after Heracles or Hercules. Hercules is descended from Danaea, the mother of Perseus, and Samson is from the tribe of Dan, a similar sounding word. Both kill a lion (Euripides, *Heracles* 360–364; Judg 14:8–11). Both lose their wives (Apollodorus, *Library* 2, 6, 1; Judg 15:1–3). Both are captured but then kill their assailants (Herodotus, *Histories* II, 45; Apollodorus, *Library* 2, 5, 11; Judg 15:11–16). Both obtain water from a broken rock (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* IV, 1440–1450; Judg 15:18–19). Hercules takes down the walls of Mycenae (Euripides, *Heracles* 990–1010), as Samson carries off the city gates (Judg 16:1–3). Pterelaos loses power and subsequently dies because of the loss of his golden hair (Apollodorus, *Library* 2, 4, 7), as Samson loses strength with his haircut (Judg 16:19–20) (Wajdenbaum

2011: 224–29). I have adduced additional parallels between Hercules and Samson (Gnuse 2018).

Aristarchus accompanies the Phocaeans to colonize Massalia and be their priestess (Strabo, *Geography* IV, 1, 4), just as the Danites take the priest of Micah (Judg 18:27–31) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 229–30).

Titus Livius I, 9–13, tells the story of the rape of the Sabine women and Herodotus, *Histories* VI, 138, tells of the Pelgasian abduction of the Athenian women, both of which are quite comparable to the seizure of the young girls at Shiloh by the Benjaminites (Judg 21:19–24) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 231–34) (cf. Gnuse 2007).

As the blind seer Phineus awaits the return of the argonauts (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* II, 180–205), so also blind Eli waits for his sons (1 Sam 4:13–18) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 239–40).

Cadmus of Tyre founds Thebes by observing where a cow, that had never been yoked before, finally collapses (Apollodorus, *Library* 3, 4, 1), just as the Philistines return the Ark of Covenant with two cows that had never been yoked before (1 Sam 6:1–3) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 240–41).

Samuel's speech in 1 Samuel 8 condemning kings is inspired by a speech by Theseus of Athens in Euripides' *Suppliants* (Wajdenbaum 2011: 32, 241–42).

In Herodotus, *Histories* X, 470–505, the Paionians attack the Perinthians who challenge the former to come to fight them, just as Jonathan's Israelite attack on the Philistines is precipitated when the latter challenge the former to attack them (1 Sam 14:8–12) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 242–43).

The reckless attack of Diomedes and Odysseus upon the Trojans (Homer, *Iliad* X, 470–505, 520–525) is described as equally murderous as the attack by Jonathan and his armor bearer upon the Philistines (1 Sam 14:13–15) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 243–44).

Achilles dresses Patroclus for battle (Homer, *Iliad* XIII, 130–140), as Saul dresses David (1 Sam 17:3–7, 37–38) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 244–45).

Hector tells Ajax that he will feed his bodies to the wild animals (Homer, *Iliad* XIII, 825–830), and Goliath says the same to David (1 Sam 17:43–47) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 245–46).

Hector kills Ajax with a stone (Homer, *Iliad* XVI, 570–575), Patroclus kills Cebriones with a stone (Homer, *Iliad* XVI, 735–745), and David does likewise to Goliath (1 Sam 17:48–49) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 246).

Cambyses is mad (Herodotus, *Histories* III, 33), so is Saul (1 Sam 18:10–11, 19:4–6, 9–10). Cambyses kills the priests in an Egyptian temple (Herodotus, *Histories* III, 37–38), and Saul kills priests at Nob (1 Sam 22:9–19) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 247–48).

Odysseus feigns madness to survive (Hyginus, *Fables* 95), just as David does before the Philistines (1 Sam 21:10–15) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 248–49).

The witch Circe tells Odysseus to consult the spirit of Teiresias, a dead seer (Homer, *Odyssey* X, 315–380), just as the witch of Endor brings up the dead spirit of Samuel the seer for Saul (1 Sam 28:8–25) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 250–52).

Ajax and Saul both throw themselves upon their swords (Sophocles, *Ajax* 815–860; 1 Sam 31:3–6) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 252).

Glaucus turns around to kill Bathycles, the son of Chalcon, with a spear (Homer, *Iliad* VI, 220–230), just as Abner turns to kill Asahel with a spear (2 Sam 2:18–23) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 252–53).

Achilles weeps when Briseis is taken (Homer, *Iliad* I, 345–350), as Paltiel weeps when Michel is taken from him back to David (2 Sam 3:14–16) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 254).

Achilles mourns Patroclus (Homer, *Iliad* XXIII, 120–150), as David mourns Abner (2 Sam 3:31–36) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 254–55).

Proteus sends Bellerphon with a sealed letter calling for the latter's death, but Bellerphon survives (Homer, *Iliad* VI, 150–160), just as Uriah is sent to Joab with a letter from David calling for Uriah's death (2 Sam 11:1–27) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 257).

Nitocris kills Egyptians at a banquet in revenge for her brother's murder (Herodotus, *Histories* II, 100), as Absalom kills Amnon at a banquet for his sister's rape (2 Sam 13:18–20) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 258–59).

Plato's *Laws* 868d-e call for a three-year exile as punishment for killing your spouse, which is the time Absalom spends in exile after killing his half-brother, Amnon (2 Sam 13:37–39) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 259–60).

Herodotus, *Histories* II, 121, mentions how guards have half of their beards shaved, comparable to what the Ammonites do to David's representatives (2 Sam 10:4–5) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 260).

Phoenix sleeps with his father's concubine (Homer, *Iliad* IX, 440–480), as does Reuben (Gen 35:22; 49:4) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 260–61).

Cheops forces people to build the pyramids according to Herodotus, *Histories* II, 124), as Solomon forces people to work on his building projects (1 Kgs 5:13–18; 6:7; 9:10–22) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 269). Croesus is like Solomon in terms of wealth and oppression (Herodotus, *Histories* I, 27–30, 92). Solon visits Croesus to praise his wisdom (Herodotus, *Histories* I, 29–30), as the Queen of Sheba does for Solomon (1 Kgs 10:1–3). Croesus offers huge sacrifices at Delphi (Herodotus, *Histories* I, 50), as Solomon does at Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:5) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 270–73).

Fire falls upon the funeral pyre of Patroclus (Homer, *Iliad* XXIII, 190–222), as fire falls on Elijah's sacrifice at Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:36–40) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 276–77).

In Plato's allegory of the cave people come out into the light of truth, just as Elijah comes out of the cave on Mt. Horeb to encounter divine revelation (1 Kgs 19:9–14) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 277–78).

Agamemnon calls the seer Calchas a liar (Homer, *Iliad* I, 100–110), as Ahab calls Micaiah-ben-Imlah a lying prophet (1 Kgs 22:7–8) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 278).

Hermes pulls an ax out of the water for a workman (Aesop, "Hermes and the Workman", *Fables*), as does Elisha (2 Kgs 6:1–7) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 281–82).

Darius shoots an arrow into the air to anticipate victory over the Greeks (Herodotus, *Histories* V, 105), and Joash of Israel shoots an arrow through the window to predict his victory over the Arameans (2 Kgs 13:14–19) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 282–83).

The sun moves for Sethos (Herodotus, *Histories* II, 142), as it does for Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:8–11) (Wajdenbaum 2011: 284–85).

Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History both end with the fall of a great city, Sestos and Jerusalem (Herodotus, *Histories* IX 115, 118–20; 2 Kgs 24:20-5:7). Both tell how the city falls, how the leaders flee at night, how they are caught, that the king is put in chains, and that their son/s are killed before them. Of course, both histories are nine books in length (Wajdenbaum 2011: 287–88).

Several points need to be made about this long list of examples that Wajdenbaum provides. Of course, many of the examples seem rather superficial. Most of those I actually omitted from the list; he has about half again as many examples as those listed here. The superficial examples that I have mentioned include: 1) Thespius, Hercules, Laban, and Jacob; 2) Odysseus and Joseph as archers; 3) Menelaus, Abram, and Sarai; 4) Theocymenus and Abimelech; 5) Amphiarus and Korah; 6) Athena and Balaam; 7) Lemnina women and Phineas; 8) Phineus and Eli; 9) Paioneans and Jonathan; 10) Diomedes, Odysseus, and Jonathan; 11) Glaucus and Abner; and 12) the shaved beards of the guards and David's messengers. There simply were not solid parallels between the Greek and the biblical stories. However, other examples impressed me as being substantive, and these include: 1) Hyrieus and Abraham; 2) Philemon, Baucis, and Lot's family; 3) Xerses, Tamar, and Judah; 4) Odysseus and Joseph in Egypt; 5) Aesop, Joseph, and Benjamin; 6) Hercules and Moses with the seven daughters; 7) Battus and Moses; 8) Asclepius and Moses; 9) horses of Achilles and Balaam's donkey; 10) Plato's Ideal State and the Deuteronomistic History's vision of Israel; 11) spies at Troy and Jericho; 12) Agamemnon and Joshua pray for the sun to stop; 13) Leonidas and Gideon in battle; 14) Iphigenia and Jephthah's daughter; 15) the lives and Hercules and Samson; 16) Bellerphon and Uriah; 17) Cheops, Croesus, and Solomon; 18) Darius and Joash shoot arrows; and 19) the cities of Sestos and Jerusalem fall. In these stories there are several points of connection between the accounts, and the accounts are often quite distinctive in their plot.

Overall, the sheer magnitude of the examples commands our attention. One cannot simply dismiss all of these examples as sheer coincidences. Nor can one casually say that such stories are common in folklore around the world. The number of the parallels preclude the possibility of coincidence, and one cannot find parallels in other literatures for all these parallel examples found in Greek and biblical literature.

It is totally absurd to say that the Greek authors got their material from the Bible, as some have done. They are simply too many Greek authors here; they could not all have been familiar with the biblical text. The principle of Occam's Razor demands that we assume that one biblical author or final editor was familiar with a host of Greek literary works rather than to say that a host of Greek authors knew the biblical text. As biblical scholars we need to come to grips with Wajdenbaum's arguments. I personally believe that most of his examples are a bit stretched, but the number of valid examples he presents convinces me that there were significant additions to an already existent Primary History in the Hellenistic era.

Wajdenbaum might respond to me that some Greek stories directly inspire some biblical stories, but more often occasional Greek motifs appear in biblical stories. He would respond to all those instances which I deem to be weak examples by saying those are instances where some Greek themes became part of the biblical story, and that I was being too picky to exclude them.

In addition to the similarity of narratives in Greek traditions and the biblical text, Wajdenbaum has another set of similarities with his consideration of laws. He is firmly convinced that the biblical text in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy has drawn many of its secular laws from Plato's work, *Laws*. Thus, he makes the following observations about similar laws:

We should respect parents (*Laws* 931e; Exod 20:12; Lev 19:3). Do not move landmarks (*Laws* 842e; Deut 19:14). You must pay for injury done to another (*Laws* 876e–877b; Exod 21:17–21). A master can kill a slave without punishment sometimes (*Laws* 865c–d; Exod 21:21). Damage to another's land must be repaired (*Laws* 843c–e; Exod 22:5–6). Burning a neighbor's field requires restitution (*Laws* 843d–e; Exod 22:5–6). A son is not judged for his father's crimes (*Laws* 856c–d; Deut 24:16). A thief must repay double (*Laws* 857a; Exod 22:2–3). A thief breaking in at night may be killed (*Laws* 874b–c; Exod 22:4). The owner of a goring bull may be prosecuted for murder if his bull kills someone (*Laws* 873d–e; Exod 21:28–32). Children of slaves belong to the master (*Laws* 930d–e; Exod 21:4). Greeks should not have Greeks for slaves (*Republic* 469c), and Hebrew slaves must not be held for more than seven years by Israelites (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12). Murder of a parent deserves death (*Laws* 872d–e; Exod 21:12–17, not a good parallel, I believe). Laws are given on wounds (*Laws* 865c–d; Exod 21:17–21, not a good parallel, I believe). Boundary stones ought not be moved (*Laws* 842a–843b; Deut 19:14). Travellers may eat food in a stranger's field modestly (*Laws* 844d–845d; Deut 23:24–25). Worship should be centralized in Greek temples or the Jerusalem Temple (*Laws* 909d–910a, 924c–e; Num 27:1–11). The country should be ruled by a good king (*Laws* 709e–710b; Deut 17:14–20). Condemnation of witchcraft occurs (*Laws* 932e–933e; Deut 18:9–14). Leaders should not take bribes (*Laws* 955c–d; Deut 16:18–20; 19:4–6). Involuntary manslaughter does not deserve death (*Laws* 865a–c; Deut 19:4–6). Perjury merits death (*Laws* 937b–c; Deut 19:16–19). Merchants must be honest (*Laws* 916d; Deut 25:13–16). A discovered corpse demands a city purify itself (*Laws* 874b; Deut 21:1–9, not a good parallel, I believe). Orphans need protection (*Laws* 927b–e; Exod 22:22–24; Deut 24:17). A disobedient son may be punished by civic authorities (*Laws* 928d–929d, exile; Deut 21:18–21, death). No interest should be imposed on loans to fellow citizens (*Laws* 742b; Exod 22:25; Deut 23:19–20). Strangers may reside in the land (*Laws* 850a–b; Lev 19:33–34). Land belongs to families and cannot be sold (*Laws*741b–c; Lev 25:8–17). Foreign slaves must not be treated harshly (*Laws* 777b–d; Lev 25:39–47) (Wajdenbaum 2010: 136–38; 2011: 68, 159–67, 190–204).

Wajdenbaum's selection of laws is less impressive than the parallels he observes among the narratives. Many of these laws are similar because common sense in both cultures would provide the same punishment or principle of

restitution. Some are similar because both Greek and biblical laws were rooted in a legal tradition which goes back to the ancient Near East. Finally, laws are rather simple, so that a similarity will entail one detail, unlike stories which can have several details of similarity. Laws will basically have to make a straightforward logical conclusion, whereas a story line can move in an infinite number of directions. In a couple of instances Wajdenbaum points out that biblical laws and Greek laws in Plato's *Laws* occur in the same sequence. That is probably coincidence, especially since he observes this only in a few cases. Thus, his enumeration of parallel laws is not as convincing as the great number of similar narrative accounts that he adduces. Those parallels deserve our attention.

A strident critique of Wajdenbaum has been sounded by Serge Frolov (Frolov 2013: 273–85). He declares Wajdenbaum's work to be sloppy in that he does not really do structural analysis, does not really discuss the myth of the Argonauts as the title implies, does not analyze biblical texts very closely, does not assess the relative strength of his parallels despite the "avalanche" of examples, does not discuss whether some coincidental themes are common in world literature, does not work well with Greek and Hebrew, does not recognize other meaningful scholarship in the field, and compares too many accounts on the basis of a few minor details in both accounts (quite true, I say!). With Frolov I would especially say that in comparing two accounts there should be shared elements in the plotline that follow in the same sequence, and too many of Wajdenbaum's examples fail in this regard. Frolov asks some pointed questions. If the Enneateuch (Primary History) is Hellenistic: 1) Why do we not find more Persian and Greek loanwords? 2) Why is the language of the Enneateuch not more similar to late works like Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel, and Esther? 3) Why did the Enneateuch pose translation problems for translators of the Septuagint? 4) Why are there not historical allusions to the events of the post-exilic era and the Hellenistic era? (Minimalists, however, have located examples of such allusions not only in the Persian era especially, but also the Hellenistic era.) 5) Why does the Enneateuch seem to know more cuneiform sources than Berossus can provide us? (Gmirkin would argue with that, saying Berossus is sufficient to provide the necessary parallels.) 6) Why does the Enneateuch seem familiar with royal chronicles of Samaria and Jerusalem, and furthermore these accounts are backed up by archaeological materials, such as Assyrian annals? 7) How could the rest of the First Testament arise after the Enneateuch in the short time of the third and second centuries BCE? (Minimalists have discussed that possibility.) 8) Why would there be hope for the restoration of the Davidic Dynasty as late as the third and second centuries BCE when such hopes should have been dead? (Minimalists believe those hopes were connected to the Hasmonean dynasts. Frolov forgets that Christians still used these hopes to speak of Jesus.) 9) Why do the Samaritans have a Pentateuch if they split from Jerusalem before the Hellenistic era? (Minimalists suggest that the split between Samaria and Jerusalem occurred in the Hellenistic era.) Frolov makes some good points, many of which I also affirm, but some of his arguments can be countered. Thus, the arguments of Wajdenbaum are not easily dismissed as the observations of a "dilettante", as Frolov suggests.

Various authors

There are a number of other authors whose work is not as extensive as those already discussed, or they suggest the Persian period more than the Hellenistic era as the locus of origin for biblical texts. But they make significant observations and their books and articles are frequently quoted in the Hellenistic origin debate, so they are worthy of mention.

John Strange believes that the book of Joshua is really a veiled narrative which speaks about the accomplishments and the aspirations of the Maccabean kings in the second century BCE. Joshua's conquest of the tribal area of Benjamin reflects the second century BCE Hasmonean conquest of this land from the Samaritans, and Joshua's activity in the Transjordan reflects the Hasmonean seizure of this land from Hellenistic cities (Strange 1993: 136–41).

Thomas Bolin suggests that the Hellenistic era is the place to look for the final redaction of the Pentateuch. His chief arguments proceed from a study of Ezra and Nehemiah which, in his opinion, do not demonstrate any awareness of the accounts in the Pentateuch. Even by the late fourth century BCE there is no awareness of a biblical corpus of literature like the First Testament. In the Hellenistic period the Jews finally felt the need to create a past (Bolin 1996).

Flemming Nielsen believes that the Deuteronomistic Historian was influenced by Herodotus in regard to the emphasis upon the tragic dimensions in the stories presented by both. By tragic Nielsen believes that both authors emphasized the distance between people and the divine, the need for humans to keep their proper place in the order of life, and how pride and overstepping one's boundaries in life brings punishment or destruction. He assumes the biblical materials were generated in the Hellenistic era after 300 BCE, but he gives no arguments other than to say that this is the only logical period when a biblical author would have had access to the writings of Herodotus (Nielsen 1997: 114, 164, et passim). One could easily use his observations and assume the later Persian period as the time of origin.

Jan-Wim Wesselius wrote a monograph that demonstrates how the books of Genesis and Exodus show that the biblical author is inspired by Herodotus, and the latter's narration of the lives of Persian kings. He compares in great detail the similarities between Joseph and Cyrus, and especially between Moses and Xerses. Joseph and Cyrus both have dreams, are exposed to die, go into foreign exile, are hidden for a time, and become ascendant when their identity is revealed. Moses and Xerses go forth to conquer either Canaan or Greece, and cross water with their people. Many other details are mentioned as well as comparisons between Terah and Phraortes, Abraham and Cyaxares, Isaac and Astyges, and Jacob and Mandane (Wesselius 1999; 2002: 6–47). Though Wesselius posits that these books were crafted in Nehemiah's Jerusalem in the later fifth century BCE, and places the range of dates for the origin of the Primary History from 425 BCE to 300 BCE, later minimalist authors have referred to his detailed research as evidence that these books more likely were written in the Hellenistic era after 300 BCE.

Katherine Stott observes that the rise of David, as it is described in the biblical text, may be inspired by the narrative that describes the ascendancy of Cyrus to

the throne of Persia and Media. She observes the following parallels: 1) Cyrus and David have humble beginnings, 2) both enter the court of the previous king, 3) that king is jealous of both young men, 4) both are threatened with death by that king, 5) both flee the court, 6) both attain roles of leadership, 7) there is a defection of an ally, 8) both usurp rule of the kingdom, 9) with success resulting from military prowess, 10) the old king's life is spared for a time, 11) but there is a tragic element in the fall of the previous king, and 12) the result is the formation of a new political entity (Stott 2002: 62–71). Stott believes that only in the Hellenistic era would this text have been available for a biblical author to use in crafting the Davidic narratives (Stott 2002: 77–78).

Daniel Hawk observes that the *Orestia* of Aeschylus and 1 Samuel 8 through 2 Kings 8 share similar structure and characters. Both have a tripartite scheme and use metaphors to reflect the transition from a kinship society to a civic society. Agamemnon and Saul reflect the old order, Orestes and David show the transition, and Athena and Solomon inaugurate the new order (Hawk 2003: 73–88). The Deuteronomistic Historian found in the *Orestia* a model for his "received traditions concerning the Israelite monarchy" (Hawk 2003: 88). The Hellenistic era would have been the time when a biblical author might have had access to the writings of Aeschylus.

Gerhard Larsson observes that there is no awareness of the biblical history prior to the second century BCE. At the turn of the third century BCE, Hecataeus of Abdera has no knowledge of the biblical rendition of the exodus narrative when he speaks of Moses. Furthermore, there are significant similarities between Berossus (280 BCE) and the biblical accounts of creation of humanity, the flood, and ancient rulers of great age. Manetho's grand history of Egypt divides history into significant eras, as does the biblical history, and Palestine was under Egyptian Ptolemaic rule when his history was crafted. He thus concludes that the biblical accounts were created in the second century BCE and influenced by significant third-century BCE Greek historians such as Berossus, Manetho, and Eratosthenes (Larsson 2004).

Emanuel Pfoh believes that though the Primary History was created in the Hellenistic era, some traditions did come from the Assyrian and Persian eras and were developed by scribes over the years. Ultimately, the overall message of the text was shaped under Hellenistic influence (Pfoh 2014: 23, 33–35).

Etienne Nodet believes that the Pentateuch arose in the early third century BCE, but the Prophets and some of the Writings were created in the second century BCE. All were generated in Alexandria (Nodet 2014).

Philippe Guillaume suggests that the book of Judges was inserted into the Deuteronomistic History in the second century BCE by scribes in Alexandria who were reflecting the ideological needs of the Hasmonean rulers in Palestine (Guillaume 2014). He discounts individually the references elsewhere in the First Testament to the judges, saying that they do not prove the existence of a book (Guillaume 2014: 147–54). Judges was inspired by Hesiod's *Works and Days*, especially the section on the heroes, which Hesiod inserted into the four ages of metal, and in the same way Judges was inserted into the Deuteronomistic History

(Guillaume 2014: 154–57). Having stories about heroic judges prior to David and Solomon undermines the claims of the Davidic Dynasty, which helps the Hasmonean dynasts who had no Davidic ancestry behind their claims of messianic rule (Guillaume 2014: 164).

Personal observations

I have been involved in this discussion over the past twenty years. I have suggested that Greek narratives do lie behind some of the narratives in the biblical text, which implies for some accounts a very late Persian era origin and for other accounts a Hellenistic era origin.

I have suggested the following: 1) Hesiod's *Theogony*, in part, was an influential source for the author of Genesis 1 (Gnuse 2017c). 2) Stories found in Ovid's *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* lie behind the narratives of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18–19 (Gnuse 2017b). 3) A narrative about Democedes of Croton in the *Histories* of Herodotus may have given rise to the narrative about Joseph interpreting the dreams of pharaoh in Genesis 41 (Gnuse 2010a). 4) The short narration about the talking horses of Achilles in the *Iliad* may be spoofed by the account of Balaam's donkey in Numbers 22 (Gnuse 2017d). 5) The sacrifice of Iphigenia in two plays by Euripides may have inspired the account of Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter in Judges 11 (Gnuse 2019). 6) A number of Greek legends about Heracles appear to have influenced the Samson narratives in Judges 13–16, at a late date, most likely the Hellenistic era (Gnuse 2018). 7) "The Rape of the Sabine Women" as an old tale recalled by Livy and Plutarch may be the template for the abducted girls in Judges 21 (Gnuse 2007). 8) Arrian's account of Alexander the Great and the spilt water in the *Anabasis of Alexander* may have inspired a similar story of David in 2 Samuel 23 (Gnuse 1998). The narratives of Joseph and Jephthah could have been placed in the biblical text during the Persian period, but the other five narratives seem to me to have a Hellenistic era origin.

I personally believe that the bulk of the Primary History was created by 400 BCE. I suggest in numerous writings that the Elohist originated in the seventh or sixth centuries BCE (Gnuse 1995; 2000; 2012; 2017a), the Deuteronomistic History in the sixth century BCE, the Yahwist in the early fifth century BCE (Gnuse 2010b), and the Priestly tradition in the late fifth century to fourth century BCE. But significant accounts continued to be added in the fourth and third centuries BCE, especially in those portions of the text that appear as appendages to biblical books (Joseph Novella in Genesis 39–50, Samson tales in Judges 13–16, miscellaneous accounts in Judges 11, 17–21, Davidic traditions in 2 Samuel 22–24) and in accounts that appear to have been expanded in the older narratives (Abraham, Lot, Balaam, and Jephthah).

Because of my own research, I am sympathetic to the "minimalist" viewpoint, especially those ideas suggested by Lemche and Thompson, who admit the existence of biblical narratives prior to the Hellenistic era. I, however, assume that those narratives are more expansive than they are willing to acknowledge. I am fascinated by the views of Gmirkin, Niesiolowski-Spano, and Wajdenbaum. I am

not convinced, as are they, that the Primary History is completely a Hellenistic creation. Nor am I convinced by all of their arguments. But ultimately the point that I wish to make is that the scholarship of these authors must be taken seriously in the future and not facilely dismissed, as is too often the case on this side of the Atlantic. They may represent the future of critical studies in the First Testament.

Note

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2 Spilt water

Tales of David in 2 Sam 23:13–17 and of Alexander in Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 6.26.1–3[1]

In world literature there are several folktales about the military leader who refuses water offered to him in a time of distress because he wishes to affirm his solidarity with soldiers who share his distress. Though there apparently are not enough instances to merit a category of classification in the typology proposed by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, nonetheless a number of years ago a folklorist, Eleanor Hull, provided a rudimentary discussion of some of these stories.[2] A fuller list of examples includes the narrative of David and his soldiers in 2 Sam 23:13–17 (1 Chron 11:15–19), the repetition of this story by Josephus in *Ant* 7.311–314, three accounts about Alexander the Great reported by Quintus Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander* 7.5.9–12),[3] Plutarch (*Lives*, Alexander 42.3–6),[4] and Arrian (*Anabasis of Alexander* 6.26.1–3),[5] the account of Sir Philip Sidney at the Battle of Zutphen in 1585, and the legend of the Irish king Conaire the Great. Two of these accounts stand out from the others due to the remarkable similarities which they share: the story of David and Arrian's account of Alexander. An investigation of this phenomenon might provide some significant insights into the nature of biblical literature.

Questions about the biblical account

2 Sam 23:13–17 (1 Chron 11:15–19) contains a short heroic tale of David and his mighty warriors, wherein "three mighty men" broke through enemy lines to obtain water for David, which he then poured on the ground as an offering to the Lord. This short narrative has exercised the attention of commentators in regard to several questions. I shall mention some of these, because they pertain to the narrative analysis of this text.

1) Why did the men risk their lives to penetrate enemy lines for water, when water might have been found elsewhere more easily? Usually commentators suggest that David wished for the water from Bethlehem for sentimental reasons, since that was his home,[6] or that he longed for fresh water rather than stored water (Caird 1953: 1169), or that it was simply an "idle remark" with little forethought on David's part (Herzberg 1964: 405). But all of these seem to be poor excuses by the commentators to explain the movement of the plot

in this short story. Essentially, when David's men sought water, there was no indication that they were in a situation of dire thirst. But some commentators still suspect that water shortage was indeed the problem (Ackroyd 1977: 224). If that were the case, then an attack would have been logical at this time in order to obtain water supplies. Thus, David's longing for water appears to have been inappropriate (McCarter 1984: 495). So we must assume that the soldiers' mad dash for water was not motivated by life-threatening thirst, as is the case with other related stories.

2) The text speaks of a well at Bethlehem, but later tradition and archaeology know of no such well there. Why does the text refer to such a well? Some commentators assume that perhaps such a well existed in David's day but disappeared in later years (Smith 1899: 385). This is plausible, but one becomes suspicious of this explanation since other ancient testimonies also question the existence of a well, and attempt to read something else into the passage, such as a "pit". The Qere reading in the Masoretic text (MT) for well is *bôr*, "pit", and the Septuagint (LXX) translation also reads *lavkkou*, "pit". To this, commentators respond that "pit" refers to a spring of living water rather than a well (Smith 1899: 386), or that the word "pit" was introduced into the story in later years when it was known that no well existed in Bethlehem (Driver 1913: 366–67; Anderson 1989: 276). These, however, appear to be forced explanations. What if "pit" was actually the more original word, and well was introduced in later versions of the MT. Perhaps the word "pit" may be part of the evidence for the origin of the story.
3) Why did David pour the water on the ground as an offering to the Lord? Some suggest that David did this to affirm the courage of the soldiers while equally implying that their actions were foolhardy attempts to please him (McCarter 1984: 495–96). If this is true, what did David mean by wishing for the water in the first place? If it was not sentimental longing or verbal indiscretion on his part, did David really wish for his troops to seize the city, and the three warriors simply misunderstood the subtle nuance of his statement (Robinson 1993: 280–81)? Either we are not told some necessary information, or there is a problem with this plot.
4) What did David mean when he subsequently spoke of the water being equivalent to the blood of the men who risked their lives? Commentators assume that David meant by this that the water obtained at such a great risk to human life was now too precious for him to drink, and thus it became sacred, like blood offered to Yahweh. So he performed a ritual action of pouring it upon the ground, for it now had become blood symbolically.[7] Walter Brueggemann even speaks poetically of David engaging in an act of "sacramental imagination" (Brueggemann 1990: 349). The concrete message to the soldiers would be that in the future the men ought not undertake something so dangerous for a mere drink of water; David wished not to imperil the lives of his men for his own whims (McCarter 1984: 495). These are fine explanations, but one still suspects that there is some imagery here that we do not quite understand. Pouring blood on the ground, even "symbolic blood", does not seem like an

acceptable Jewish custom. How would this have been perceived by these soldiers, and how would they have gotten the point, if they already misunderstood David's initial statements about the water?

5) For whom was David performing this act? What response did he seek to inspire by this act? Commentators generally assume rather passively that the intended audience were the soldiers in his camp, and that the message was that they should not recklessly endanger their lives for their leader. But one still suspects that there are deeper reasons that we may be missing, which may be provided by comparative narrative analysis.
6) Who were the three men who performed this deed? Readers of the text would be tempted to assume that the three heroes are those mentioned especially in 2 Sam 23:8–12, the narrative preceding our account: Josheb-basshebeth, Eleazar son of Dodo, and Shammah son of Agee. However, many commentators suspect that originally these two accounts were separate oral traditions, and that the heroes could refer to someone else, perhaps even other members of the select thirty warriors mentioned in 2 Sam 23:18–39, the material which follows our narrative. This would explain why the MT has a reference to the "thirty" while the majority of the translations refer only to the "three".[8]
7) Finally, the ritual of pouring a liquid, such as water or wine, into the ground as a libation sacrifice was common in the ancient world, though not too frequently practiced in the biblical tradition before the Rabbinic era (McCarter 1984: 144). When the biblical text states that David poured out the water to the Lord, it makes it appear as though David engaged in a ritual activity. Commentators often point to passages where a parallel rite might be observed (Gen 35:14; 1 Sam 7:6; Hos 9:4; Jer 7:18; Sir 50:15), thereby implying that such libations, though uncommon, were practiced among the Israelites and the post-exilic Jews (Ackroyd 1977: 224; Anderson 1989: 276).

However, there are problems with these textual allusions. In Gen 35:14 Jacob pours out a drink offering and oil on a pillar at Bethel, which may be the memory of a pre-Israelite or Canaanite ritual. In 1 Sam 7:6 Israelites poured out water before the Lord and fasted prior to a battle. This is a penitential and purification rite which does not appear to be related to David's action (McCarter 1980: 144). Nevertheless, it does seem to be the closest parallel. In Jer 7:18 Jeremiah says, "they pour out drink offerings to other gods", which refers to non-Yahwistic rituals. In Hos 9:4 the prophet declares, "they shall not pour drink offerings of wine to the Lord". Here, too, one suspects the prophet is condemning pagan customs which Israelites did in their worship of Yahweh. Sir 50:15 refers to Aaron pouring a "drink offering of the blood of the grape", which is obviously a late and very poetic allusion. Overall, one discovers no biblical legislation governing the practice of drink offerings, and the paucity of references suggests drink offerings were probably a form of non-Yahwistic piety. One then further suspects that David was not engaging in a legitimate form of Yahweh devotion, if indeed it was a ritual act at all. More likely the text portrays this action of David as a spontaneous symbolic action. But if it was not a well-known custom among Israelites either as a cultic

act or a spontaneous gesture, how would it be understood by David's soldiers or the later Israelite and Jewish audience of the narrative?

The custom was basically uncommon in the biblical world, but such libations were frequent in the Greek world. The symbolic action by a Greek warrior would make more sense to his soldiers and the audience of the story. This last point is the significant detail which truly raises our suspicion about this account and sends us forth on a literary quest for a parallel account which might explain the anomalies in our biblical text.

Parallels with stories about Alexander the Great

There is a narrative in Greek literature which not only bears a basic plot similarity to our biblical text, but it also contains some of the same unusual details. In this narrative these details do not arouse the same suspicion as they do in regard to the story of David, for they make more sense in the context of the Greek variant. This hauntingly gives one the impression that the Greek account in some way is prior to the biblical narrative, and the narrative problems in the biblical text arose when it was "spun-off" of the more original Greek story. However, there is a serious problem with this assumption. The Greek story comes from an author in the second century CE, Arrian, and it speaks of a great general from the fourth century BCE, Alexander the Great, both tremendously removed from the days of David or even the theoretic time when the Deuteronomistic History was generated in the sixth century BCE. Nonetheless, an evaluation of this narrative may prove fruitful. In *Anabasis of Alexander* 6.26.1–3, Arrian records the following heroic action of Alexander, which occurred as the Macedonian army was crossing the Gedrosian desert on its return from India after Alexander's men had refused to conquer more countries (Brunt 1983: 178–81).

> The army was marching through sand with the heat already burning, since they were obliged to get to water at the end of the march, and this was some distance ahead. Alexander himself was in the grip of thirst, and it was with much difficulty that he persisted in leading the way on foot, so that the rest of the troops should (as usually happens in such a case) bear their sufferings more easily, with all sharing the distress equally. At this moment some light-armed troops left the army to look for water, and found some, collected in a shallow torrent-bed, a poor and wretched water-hole; they easily collected it and hurried to Alexander, feeling that they were bringing something of great value, and, when they came near, poured the water into a helmet and offered it to the king. He took it and thanked them, but then poured it out in the sight of everyone; and at this action the army was so much heartened that you would have guessed that all had drunk what Alexander had poured away. This deed of Alexander's I specially commend as proof of his endurance and also of his generalship.

Classical scholars also point to parallel narratives in Quintus Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander* 7.5.9–12) and Plutarch (*Lives*, Alexander 42.3–6), both of which are attributed to a much earlier time in Alexander's campaigns.

Quintus Curtius Rufus[9] locates the time of Alexander's experience during his campaign in Sogdiana, which was prior to his invasion of India. His text reads as follows in Rolfe's translation (Rolfe 1946: 164–67):

> The king, worried by such troubles, was surrounded by his friends, who begged him to remember that the greatness of his own courage was the sole remedy for the weakness of the army; when two of those who had gone ahead to choose a place for a camp met them, bringing water in skins, in order to aid their sons who were in that same army and whom they knew to be suffering severely from thirst. When they met Alexander, one of them opened one of the skins, filled a cup which he was carrying with him, and offered it to the king. He took it; then, having asked for whom he was bringing the water, he learned that he was bringing it for his sons. Thereupon, returning the full cup, just as it had been offered to him, the king said: "I cannot endure to drink alone, and I cannot distribute so little among all; do you hasten and give to your children what you have brought for them".

Plutarch[10] (*Lives*, Alexander 42.3–6) places the event even earlier to a time when Alexander was pursuing Darius after the last major battle at Gaugamela. His account reads as follows in Perrin's translation (Perrin 1967: 348–51):

> In consequence of the pursuit of Darius, which was long and arduous (for in eleven days he rode thirty-three furlongs), most of his horsemen gave out, and chiefly for lack of water. At this point some Macedonians met him who were carrying water from the river in skins upon their mules. And when they beheld Alexander, it being now midday, in a wretched plight from thirst, they quickly filled a helmet and brought it to him. To his enquiry for whom they were carrying the water, they replied: "For our own sons; but if thou livest, we can get other sons, even if we lose these". On hearing this he took the helmet into his hands, but when he looked around and saw the horsemen about him all stretching out their heads and gazing at the water, he handed it back without drinking any, but with praises for the men who had brought it; "For", said he, "if I should drink of it alone, these horsemen of mine will be out of heart". But when they beheld his self-control and loftiness of spirit, they shouted out to him to lead them forward boldly, and began to goad their horses on, declaring that they would not regard themselves as weary, or thirsty, or as mortals at all, so long as they had such a king.

We may observe the striking similarities in all three Alexander accounts: 1) Alexander and his troops are threatened by thirst in a desert. 2) Water is brought to Alexander 3) in a helmet or a cup 4) by soldiers, 5) who thus engage in a significant act of self-sacrifice (either of themselves, as in Arrian, or of their children, as in Curtius Rufus and Plutarch). 6) Alexander refuses the water 7) in front of his troops 8) and thus inspires them in their arduous journey. Certainly, modern classical scholars have been correct in suggesting these three accounts are related.

The versions told by Curtius Rufus and Plutarch have particular details in them which distinguish them from the narratives in 2 Sam 23:13–17 and Arrian's account. 1) The soldiers are not directly with Alexander's own unit. 2) They found the water and brought it back in skins initially. 3) Their purpose was to bring the water to their children, not to their commander, 4) but they were willing to give the water to Alexander. 5) When Alexander discovered for whom the water was intended, and when he realized he could not share it with all his troops, 6) he returned the water to the men who had found it. These unique details distinguish the two accounts from those of 2 Samuel's David and Arrian's Alexander.

Arrian's story of Alexander bears some remarkable similarities with the David account in 2 Sam 23:13–17, which it does not share with either version from Curtius Rufus or Plutarch. These similarities include the following: 1) The soldiers come from the leader's own military unit. 2) They dangerously leave the unit with the 3) express purpose of finding water for the leader. 4) The source of the water is expressly described. 5) Upon locating the water they return heroically to the leader. 6) After refusing the water the leader pours the water into the ground in a dramatic gesture. 7) This gesture, in particular, is what inspires the men. The dramatic gesture is also the focal point of both stories, and that serves to unify them especially against the other two Alexander versions. Obviously form-critical similarities unite all four accounts, but the truly dramatic images are those shared by the biblical account and Arrian's narrative.

Detailed comparison of the accounts

A fuller form-critical assessment of 2 Sam 23:13–17 and the *Anabasis of Alexander* (*AA*) 6.26.1–3 will serve to highlight these similarities even more.

1) *Dangerous Environment*. Alexander's army was marching through the desert (*AA* 6.26.1), while David's army was facing an encampment of Philistines (2 Sam 23:13).
2) *Leader endangered*. Alexander "was in the grip of thirst, and it was with much difficulty that he persisted in leading the way on foot" (*AA* 6.26.1). "David longed for water and said, 'O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate'"! (2 Sam 23:15).
3) *Valiant soldiers seek water*. "At this moment some light-armed troops left the army to look for water" for Alexander (*AA* 6.26.2). For David, "three warriors broke through the camp of the Philistines" (2 Sam 23:16). In the accounts of Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plutarch the soldiers were not under direct command of Alexander.
4) *Water located*. Alexander's troops found water in a "shallow torrent bed, a poor and wretched water hole" (*AA* 6.26.2). David's men "drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate" (2 Sam 23:16). Herein the reference to "pit" by both the *Qere* reading (*bôr*) in the MT and the translation of the LXX (*lavkkou*) might provide a more direct parallel to the Alexander narrative. A pit is a more meagre source of water, and this makes the David

story more comparable to the description of the water source in the Alexander narrative. Perhaps, the *Qere* and the LXX might recall an older biblical tradition closer in form to the Alexander story than our present MT? This is highly speculative, however. In the accounts of Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plutarch we are not told about the location of the water.

5) *Water brought to the leader*. Alexander's troops "hurried to Alexander, feeling that they were bringing something of great value" (*AA* 6.26.2). By contrast we are not told about the feelings of David's men, but we can assume that they believed they had accomplished a heroic deed. In the other Alexander narratives the men speak heroically about sacrificing their children, and that is quite different from these two accounts.
6) *Water container*. We are told that Alexander's men brought the water in a helmet (*AA* 6.26.2) (also in Plutarch's version), but the biblical text provides no reference to the container. However, we could assume that soldiers on a campaign might have used their helmets as the most logical device for a bucket.
7) *Leader receives the water*. Alexander took the water, thanked them, and then poured it out (*AA* 6.26.3). David also "would not drink of it; he poured it out to the Lord" (2 Sam 23:16). This key dramatic act appears to unite the two accounts. Though Alexander's action is not described as a religious act, such libations were frequent enough in the Greek world to imply that the action of Alexander had the nuance of an offering to the gods. Arrian frequently mentions that Alexander performed such drink offerings because it was part of his personal piety (Hamilton 1971: 32). David's act is described presumably as a religious action before Yahweh. Perhaps it needed to be stated as such in the biblical text because libations were so uncommon in the Israelite/Jewish tradition. No such dramatic action is found in the accounts of Curtius Rufus or Plutarch where Alexander merely gives the water back to the men.
8) *Significance of the gesture*. Alexander poured the water out "in the sight of everyone" so as to affirm his own solidarity with his thirsty men (*AA* 6.26.3). Presumably, David poured the water out before his men, too, but we are not told this. Instead, we hear David's statements, "The Lord forbid that I should do this. Can I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives"? (2 Sam 23:17). This likewise stresses David's solidarity with his men, as well as other subtle messages. Alexander speaks dramatically in similar fashion before giving back the water in the accounts of Curtius Rufus and Plutarch.
9) *Result of gesture*. Alexander's army "was so much heartened that you would have guessed that all had drunk what Alexander poured away" (*AA* 6.26.3). No comparable statement occurs in the biblical account, though one would suspect a similar psychological impact was made upon David's soldiers. Plutarch describes how the horsemen were encouraged by Alexander's activity, but Curtius Rufus lacks any such reference.
10) *Editorial comment*. Arrian declares that this story demonstrates the endurance and generalship of Alexander (*AA* 6.26.3), and such an observation was in keeping with Arrian's characterization of Alexander (Hamilton 1971: 27;

Hammond 1993: 277). The biblical author also provides an editorial comment, but it concerns the three heroes, "The three warriors did these things" (2 Sam 23:17). Editorial comment is lacking in the other Alexander narratives.

Implications of the comparison

In my opinion, the similarities between Arrian's account of Alexander and the biblical narrative about David are significant enough to suggest the two stories are related. But how are they connected to each other? Three possible options emerge: 1) They derive from a common source, an older narrative about a third unknown military leader. 2) The biblical account influenced Arrian's version of the Alexander tradition. 3) Arrian's account in an older oral form influenced the biblical account.

Since so few stories exist in this genre (the leader who refuses precious water), one would be reluctant to suggest that an older variant exists which could lie behind both the biblical and the three Greek versions. Suggesting the existence of material as of yet undiscovered is more of an excuse than an explanation.

Given the apparent historical priority of the David traditions, one would be most inclined to suggest that Arrian was influenced somehow by the biblical narrative. But then one must explain how Arrian would come to use the biblical text, and why he would choose to use it. Greeks certainly would not pay attention to the obscure writings of the Jews. Or an explanation must be given as to how the biblical tradition might have influenced one of Arrian's sources, either written or oral. By his own testimony Arrian has considered the sources behind this tradition (*AA* 6.26.1), so we would suspect that he would be cautious about using a tradition without sufficient certainty of its origin. Classical scholars generally consider Arrian to have been a meticulous and judicious historian in the use of his sources.[11]

It could be suggested that perhaps Arrian or the Alexander traditions were influenced by Josephus' version of the biblical story in *Ant* 7.311–314. But a consideration of Josephus' account of the incident indicates that his version departs sufficiently from the biblical narrative, so that it could not be an intermediary between the biblical account and Arrian's story of Alexander. In fact, there are differences which distinguish the account in *Ant* 7.311–314 from both the biblical narrative and Arrian's version: In Josephus' rendition of David's experience the three valiant warriors 1) go a much longer distance, from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and 2) they are explicitly sent by David. 3) The question of David's thirst, which remains an ambiguous possibility in the biblical text and thus keeps the biblical text somewhat parallel to the Alexander narrative, is completely missing in Josephus' account. 4) David further speaks of how he would desire the water of Bethlehem more than a great sum of money. 5) Reference also is made to how the audacity of the three warriors caused the Philistines to remain motionless as the Israelites passed through their camp. With these differences the account of Josephus could not have been the source of inspiration by which a biblical narrative influenced Arrian, for the biblical account and Arrian's account simply agree

in certain ways with each other against Josephus' narrative. In fact, his account departs drastically from all three Alexander traditions.

Ultimately, there are three traditions which associate the story with Alexander the Great, and those accounts fall into two narrative formats. With only one biblical account, we would be hard-pressed to maintain the priority of that one account, especially when it parallels only one of the Alexander traditions. It would appear that the Alexander tradition is prior, especially the versions of Curtius Rufus and Plutarch, while 2 Samuel's David account and Arrian's version of Alexander are later. These latter two stories seem to be later due to their heightened dramatic narrative, especially the gesture and statements by the leader. For this scenario to be plausible, these stories had to have originated well before the time of the historians Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, and Arrian. This would imply that all the traditions concerning Alexander must have originated shortly after his lifetime. Only then could they have exerted some influence upon a developing biblical tradition.

Hence, we are led to consider the third possibility—that the biblical account might have been influenced by Arrian's Alexander tradition. A close narrative reading of both stories might suggest that this third possibility indeed deserves consideration. As a story, Arrian's version of Alexander's experience is consistent and makes sense. However, the David story has some interesting problems in terms of the coherence or logic of the plot. A narrative reading which peers through the Davidic account to the Alexander narrative would provide greater clarity to the biblical version.

Critical observations

When one considers the two narratives, the Alexander account has a greater sense of narrative consistency. The desert setting makes more sense as a situation in which the leader is thirsty and soldiers are willing to risk their lives. The libation of the water makes more sense in a Greek setting where such a practice was commonplace. We can return to the questions which were asked of the biblical account at the beginning of this article, and if we ask them of Arrian's Alexander narrative, logical answers can be given. We even may sense the reason for some of the anomalies in the biblical text.

1) Why did the soldiers risk their lives to obtain water for their leader? Because, in a desert journey his life was truly at risk. To offer the leader water, when all suffer from life-threatening thirst, is a noble and sacrificial gesture on the part of the soldiers. Since David was not in a desert in the biblical account, the quest for water by his men appears somewhat artificial and forced compared to the Alexander account.
2) The source of the water in the Alexander narrative is a poor and wretched water hole. One might wonder if the "pit" referred to in the *Qere* of the MT and the LXX translation reflects the presence of the Alexander narrative behind the biblical narrative. Hence, the well at Bethlehem, so described in

the MT, may be a literary creation, and that is why no other tradition knows of its existence.

3) Alexander poured the water on the ground as a way of saying that he should not receive special treatment above that of his men. Elsewhere Arrian stresses that this was an important issue for Alexander, and that is why he so often led his men into the thick of battle. The same is true of David's relationship to his men, to be sure. But the biblical narrative in 2 Sam 23:13–17 does not attach this meaning to the actions of David as clearly as Arrian does in his account.
4) David refers to the water as being like the blood of his valiant warriors. Though this fits the biblical context well, the statement is more poignant in a setting where the life of everyone is threatened by the lack of such water. The narrative of Arrian, however, lacks a saying of Alexander comparable to that of David. But if the biblical author is aware of the Alexander account, there is an irony here. For Alexander drove his men to the ends of the earth, frequently shedding their blood in foreign lands simply for the sake of his desire for imperial conquest. Perhaps the Davidic saying is placed there by the biblical author to disavow such notions of imperial conquest, perhaps even as an allusion to Alexander, if the biblical narrative is dependent upon a Greek oral tradition.
5) Though we cannot be sure for whom David performed this dramatic act, in the Alexander account it was the Macedonian army which was strengthened by Alexander's dramatic action to continue its march. The dramatic gesture and saying makes more narrative sense in the Alexander account than in the biblical account in this regard, since David may be seen as having a small contingent of soldiers.
6) The vagueness of the reference to the three heroes in the biblical account gives one pause to speculate also. Commentators suggest that David's heroes are not the three mentioned previously in the text. Perhaps the generic reference to valiant warriors may stem from the biblical narrative's dependence upon the Alexander story, where the reference was simply to certain "light-armed troops".
7) Though Arrian's narrative does not speak of Alexander performing this act of pouring the water as a cultic libation; nonetheless, such gestures were common and well understood in the Greek world. The gesture makes more sense in the hands of Alexander than in the hands of David. When David pours out the water to Yahweh, the act is seen as a religious ritual, and this sends commentators scurrying all over the biblical text to find appropriate parallels. But the results of such a parallel search are meagre, which suggests once more that this is a non-Israelite custom performed by David. Though not a hard piece of evidence, it is a suggestive piece of an argument for a Greek tradition behind the biblical version.

Hence, in a number of ways the biblical text might appear to be a variation on an Alexander narrative. Many of the details, such as the thirsty leader, the sacrifice of

the men in giving water to the leader instead of drinking it themselves, and the act of pouring the water on the ground make more sense in the Alexander narrative than in the biblical narrative. One is drawn to conclude that the biblical account might be derived from this Alexander tradition.

Dating the narrative

The logic of my argument leads to a very difficult conclusion: the priority of a tradition concerning Alexander the Great against a biblical tradition concerning David. Commentators in the past would have overlooked this comparison simply because the Alexander story came from a time much later than that of the biblical text; namely, the Deuteronomistic History, which is usually dated in its final edition to the sixth century BCE Babylonian Exile. But is that really the case?

Contemporary critical biblical scholars have proposed radical new dating scenarios for the biblical text, often pushing the creative generation of biblical materials well into the exilic and post-exilic periods. Most well-known in this regard are the conclusions of John Van Seters (1975; 1983; 1992; 1994), Roger N. Whybray (1987: 221–42), and Thomas L. Thompson (1987; 1992: 353–423) concerning the origin of Pentateuchal and Deuteronomic writings. Even more radical proposals are offered by Giovanni Garbini (1988), Niels Peter Lemche (1991; 1993; 1994), and Philip Davies (1992: 94–161) who locate the final generation of biblical literature in the Hellenistic or even Maccabean periods. If, indeed, their proposals have merit, then the possibility for a tradition about Alexander the Great influencing a biblical narrative becomes plausible. Commentators often have sensed that 2 Samuel 21–24 has the appearance of being an appendix to the greater collection of materials in Samuel, perhaps added at the last stage of editorial development.[12] This opens the door even more for the possibility of Greek influence upon these passages. In his analysis of Genesis, Van Seters frequently pointed out that good parallels or even sources for the narratives in Genesis might be found in Greek literature. He lamented the reluctance of biblical scholars in the past to look to Greece and the Greek historiographical tradition in order to discover the roots of biblical narratives and the biblical historiographical tradition (Van Seters 1992: 78–103 et passim). In a very small way this article is an attempt to undertake that very quest.

If there is validity in our comparison of 2 Sam 23:13–17 and Arrian's account of Alexander, and if indeed the Alexander tradition in some way might lie behind this biblical narrative, this opens up the question of other biblical narratives which might reflect the influence of the classical tradition. Consider, for example, the folkloristic motif concerning Samson's escapade in setting Philistine fields on fire by tying torches to the tails of paired foxes in Judg 15:4–5. It has an eerie parallel in the classical tradition. Or again, there is the strange narrative in Judg 21:15–24 concerning the kidnapping of women at a wine festival by the surviving men of the tribe of Benjamin. What connection might it have to the Roman folktale, "The Rape of the Sabine Women"? Both of these biblical stories come from sections in the book of Judges which commentators have deemed to be late additions. One

wonders about the possibility of influence from Greek and Roman traditions, if these biblical texts arose as late in the post-exilic era, as some have suggested.

In conclusion, this form-critical analysis is offered as a hypothetical suggestion. It is ultimately very difficult to prove these conclusions in a definitive way, especially when we deal with an age so distant in time, for the possibility of lost texts and literature, which could explain such thematic connections to us, looms large. The possibility of mere coincidence in narrative plots and literary motifs also exists since the accounts we consider are by their very nature rather short. However, in this current scholarly age of ferment, when our grand theories of origin for the biblical texts are being questioned, such a speculative endeavor as this paper has undertaken may be of value in raising new and challenging questions for the scholarly guild.

Notes

1 This essay was originally published as "Spilt Water: Tales of David (II Sam 23:13–17) and Alexander the Great (Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 6.26.1–3)", *SJOT* 12 (1998): 233–48.
2 Aarne (1961); Eleanor Hull (1933) evaluated the tales of David, Alexander (as told by Plutarch), Sir Philip Sidney, and Conaire the Great of Ireland, paying primary attention to the last folktale.
3 Rolfe (1946: 164–67).
4 Perrin (1967: 348–51).
5 Brunt (1983: 178–81).
6 Mauchline (1971: 317); Kyle McCarter (1984: 495); Anderson (1989: 276).
7 Mauchline (1971: 318); Ackroyd (1977: 224); McCarter (1984: 496); Anderson (1989: 276).
8 Smith (1899: 385); Caird (1953: 1168); Mauchline (1971: 317); McCarter (1984: 490).
9 Quintus Curtius Rufus lived approximately from 1 to 50 CE and wrote his work on Alexander perhaps around 41–42 CE.
10 Plutarch lived from 46 to 120 CE and wrote his *Lives* somewhere at the beginning of the second century CE, let's say 100–110 CE.
11 Hamilton (1971: 17–34); Brunt (1983: xvi–xxxiv); Hammond (1993: 189–333). However, Bosworth (1980: 16–38; 1988) provides both positive evaluation and negative critique of Arrian's methods.
12 Smith (1899: 373); Hertzberg (1964*:* 381); McCarter (1984: 443); and Anderson (1989: 248). However, Brueggemann (1988: 383–97) argues that these chapters were integrated rather well into the Deuteronomistic History early on.

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3 Abducted wives

A Hellenistic narrative in Judges 21?[1]

Hellenistic origins

In recent years several scholars have proposed a Hellenistic date for historical literature in the Hebrew Bible.[2] To that end a number of fine articles have been written for this journal.[3] Among other things these authors have variously argued for evidence of Herodotus' influence upon biblical texts, the fact that comparable "histories" in the ancient world date from the Hellenistic era (Berossos and Manetho), and how some authors in the Hellenistic era seem to show no awareness of the biblical historiography, when they should.

I do not know whether I am convinced by these arguments in regard to the entire biblical Primary History. But I am persuaded that certain texts, which appear to be "Anhangen" or appendices to biblical books, may come from a time as late as the Hellenistic era. I refer to sections such as Judges 13–16 (Samson cycle), Judges 17–21, and 2 Samuel 21–23. Their abrupt insertion into the greater narrative should make us suspicious of dating them too early. Furthermore, I believe that we can find parallels with Greek literature, and this should incline us even more to consider a Hellenistic date for these particular texts. In a previous study I observed how the story of David pouring water on the ground in 2 Sam 23:13–17 appears to be dependent upon accounts by classical sources (Plutarch and Arrian) which attribute a similar action to Alexander the Great. In this study I propose that the story of the abduction of women at Shiloh in Judges 21 might likewise have some connection with classical traditions. If correct, this indicates a fairly substantial amount of parallel material between these so-called "Anhangen" and classical texts, which might lead us to date these biblical accounts later than we have been accustomed to do in the past.

Hellenistic influences in the book of Judges

Over the years scholars have suggested that portions of the book of Judges may come from the Hellenistic era, or that at least some of the accounts in the book of Judges may have been inspired by Greek or Hellenistic narratives. For example, Thomas Römer (1998) evaluated the narrative about the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter in Judg 11:30–40 and observed that the narrative has a Hellenistic tragic

dimension to it which implies that it was inserted in the late Persian or early Hellenistic era. More recently, Klaas Spronk (2010: 26; 2014: 112) has argued that the book of Judges is a Hellenistic creation that evidences a number of Greek parallels, and in particular he mentions the kidnapping of the young girls at Shiloh.

More substantially, Othniel Margarlith published five articles exploring the connections between Greek literature and the Samson sagas in Judges 13–16.[4] He suggested that the avenue of communication by which Greek narrative themes might have come to the Israelites would have been through the Philistines, and especially through their contact with the tribe of Dan, which lived in the area where Samson was located. He felt that ideas and stories were picked up by bards in the tribe of Dan, probably in the pre-monarchic period, thus he speaks of these themes as being Minoan-Mycenaean. However, in some of his articles he seems to leave open the possibility of Philistine influence throughout the pre-exilic era in general. To posit that these Greek motifs are Minoan-Mycenaean, and communicated to Israelites prior to 1000 BCE, is to locate them too early in Greek history. These comparable Greek stories simply did not all emerge that early in Greek society. To locate the Greek influence upon Israelites after 1000 BCE is more plausible. But I believe the more likely period for Greek literary influence upon Jewish authors is in the late Persian period and Hellenistic era, for that is when a wider range of narratives would have been available to a greater number of Jewish authors. Margalith dated the influence at the time he did, simply because when Margalith wrote, scholars were dogmatically committed to dating these Samson stories very early. If we permit ourselves to lower the dates for the Samson narratives, it becomes much more feasible to look for a wider range of similarities between Greek literature and Judges 13–16.

A few of the significant similarities isolated by Margalith include the following:

1) In the birth announcement narrative in Judges 13 it is implied that God is the father of Samson, not Manoah, for in v. 6 Manoah's wife says that a "man of God came to me". Elsewhere this expression (Gen 16:4; 19:31–32; 29:23–31; 30:3; 38:2–18; 2 Sam 11:4–5; 12:24; Ezek 23:44) refers to a man getting a woman pregnant. If God is the father of Samson, then Samson is much more like a Greek personage, such as Heracles. Furthermore, the Man of God ascends in the flames of sacrifice offered by Manoah and his wife, as does Heracles ascend from the fire of the sacrificial pyre offered by his son on Mount Oeta (Margalith 1986b: 400–05).
2) Samson's hair gives him strength and the loss of it removes his strength. We find this motif in Greek literature connected with Nisus, the king of Megara, whose hair makes him invincible; with Pterelaos, king of Teleboea, whose hair makes him immortal, and with Heracles, whose hair gives him strength (Margalith 1986: 232–33).
3) Samson's riddle about honey in the carcass of the lion is paralleled only by Virgil's tale of Aristeas in which bees are in an ox carcass.[5]
4) Samson's use of the foxes to burn down fields is paralleled by the actions of Heracles and also by Carseoli (Ovid, *Fausti*, IV, 679–712). In Greek the fox

is called "torch tail" because of the red color found in Greek foxes' fur, but the Palestinian counterpart, the jackal, is a drab gray color. Margalith suspects an aetiological tale that explains how the word for fox came to describe the Israelite gray jackal (Margalith 1985: 225–27).

5) As Samson is bewitched by the love of the Philistine woman of Timnah, the harlot of Gaza, and Delilah, so Heracles loves the wiles of Deianeira and Omphale. Omphale weaves into Heracles' hair a spindle and shaft, as Delilah weaves into Samson's hair a pin, loom, and web (Judg 16:13–14), and both strongmen walk off with the weaving apparatus in their hair (Margalith 1987: 63–64).
6) Both Samson and Heracles kill a lion with their bare hands, instead of with the usual weapons that other people in the ancient Near East use (Margalith 1987: 66–67).
7) Both Samson (Judg 16:3) and Heracles hold or carry city gates (Heracles holds open the gates on Olympus) (Margalith 1987: 69).
8) Samson destroys a temple by pulling down two central support pillars, but such a structural feature describes Greek, not Near Eastern temples (Margalith 1987: 70).

This is a rather large collection of story motifs that connect Samson with the Greek world, especially with Heracles (and both are connected to the sun), especially considering that one cannot find parallels to these Samson stories in the ancient Near East. I am convinced by Margalith's argument for a connection, but not with his dating. He dates the point of contact too early for even the Greek literature to have been fully formed.

If the Samson cycle in Judges 13–16 appears to have Greek or Hellenistic parallels, perhaps also other corpora of literature which appear to be loosely connected to their context might come under consideration for a connection with Greek or even Latin literature. A case in point, then, might be the texts in Judges 17–21.

Analysis of Judges 21

Scholars have observed in passing that there is a similarity between the story in Judges 21 about the women at Shiloh kidnapped by the surviving men from the tribe of Benjamin and the accounts in classical literature about the seizure of the Sabine women by the Romans in the days of Romulus, as well as the lesser known account of how the Greek Messenians snatched virgins from Limnae in Laconia during a festival of Artemis.[6] The latter account is interesting to note, for like the account in Judges 21, it occurs at a festival while the girls are dancing in a religious ceremony (Soggin 1981: 304). Scholars, however, have not turned their attention to a detailed comparison of these classical and biblical accounts. It is also worth observing that few scholars have turned their attention to a close analysis of the biblical passage itself in Judg 21:16–24, which if taken literally, is really a story about collective rape condoned by the entire nation of Israel—a hideous story.[7]

There are a number of accounts in classical literature about the abduction of a single woman, while she is dancing, by either a god or a male human being. Demeter's daughter Kore or Persephone is dancing in a field when Hades, the god of the underworld, carries her off to become his wife and queen of the underworld. Theseus abducts Helen while she is dancing in precincts sacred to Artemis (who is the goddess in the Messenian account). Polymele, the mother of Eudorus, is abducted by the god Hermes while dancing in a sacred precinct of Artemis. Aphrodite, concealing her divine identity, invents a tale of how she was abducted from a shrine of Artemis, while dancing (Ackerman 1998: 268). Dancing in the sacred precincts of Artemis is a dangerous business. The theme of abduction while dancing appears to be common enough that it might inspire a counterpart narrative in the biblical text. Two classical narratives speak about a group abduction, the Greek story of the Messenian men at Limnae and the Roman account of the "Rape of the Sabine Women". It is the latter tale that draws our attention to its similarities with the biblical account in Judges 21.

The Sabine women and Judges 21

The two significant classical narratives about the "Rape of the Sabine Women" are recorded by Plutarch and Livy in detail and appear to me to have a number of interesting similarities with the biblical account in Judg 21:16–24. The biblical account itself is superfluous within the narrative of Judges 21. Thus, one might suggest that it was added at some very late stage and perhaps inspired by classical sources. The tribe of Benjamin had been virtually obliterated in a civil war, and there was concern to restore the population by providing wives for the surviving men, lest a tribe be forever lost. Judg 21:8–15 tells how the Israelites attacked the city of Jabesh-Gilead, killing all who were there, save four hundred virgins, who were given to the surviving men of Benjamin. Two hundred men were still lacking wives out of the original six hundred refugee Benjaminites (Judg 20:47), so another two hundred women had to be abducted at Shiloh. Thus, the Shiloh abduction story appears to be a parallel or duplicate account to the Jabesh-Gilead attack in terms of describing of how refugee Benjaminite men found wives (Gray 1977: 290). Both stories may have been included in the biblical text in order to drive home the point that the tribes of Israel made horrible decisions in their tribal council and definitely were in need of the institution of kingship, a theme that is oft repeated by the historian in the book of Judges (Soggin 1981: 300). In particular, the tribal leaders sanctioned a group abduction of women to preserve the integrity of their own vows, apparently forgetting that they went to war over the rape of one woman in the first place—an incredible inconsistency on their part (Ackerman 1998: 254–55).

To my knowledge, no one has made a direct analysis of these two accounts, the kidnapping/rape of the girls of Shiloh and the "Rape of the Sabine Women", to see how strikingly similar they really are. Although one cannot demonstrate any form-critical connection on the basis of vocabulary in the accounts; nonetheless, a detailed outline of the two stories shows a significant number of similarities in the plotline. If one compares the biblical text with the two versions of the "Rape of

the Sabine Women" recorded by Livy and Plutarch,[8] the following plot similarities may be observed:

1) *There is an initial need situation in which men do not have enough wives and the threat of extinction is significant.* The tribe of Benjamin has been decimated by war and the Romans have a surplus of men who have come to the city of Rome and have no wives. The tribe of Benjamin will disappear quickly and the population of Rome will decline rather rapidly, if wives are not found for both situations.
2) *There is a desire to correct this problem by finding wives in some unusual manner*. The Israelites consider giving their daughters to the surviving Benjaminites. The Romans send out an embassy asking for daughters for marriage for their single men. (In the previous biblical account, the city of Jabesh-Gilead was destroyed and four hundred women taken from there, Judg 21:8–15. However, since this is a different narrative, I prefer to stress the issue of how the Israelite leaders spoke of giving wives to Benjamin from the other tribes of Israel as the real point of comparison with the Roman account.)
3) *The initial planned solution does not work.* The Israelites cannot give their daughters in marriage because they have sworn an oath not to do this. The Roman embassy to the surrounding peoples to obtain wives had failed in its mission, and the Romans feel insulted. (If one includes the Judg 21:8–15 narrative, then the reason is that there are only four hundred virgin women from Jabesh-Gilead for six hundred men from Benjamin. I believe, however, that the image of a virgin woman shortage is simply the artificial motif to connect the two stories in Judges 21 or to justify the inclusion of the story about the "Abduction at Shiloh".)
4) *An abduction of women is planned as a last resort.* The Israelites will permit the Benjaminites to abduct women at the Shiloh festival. A good portion of the rather short biblical text is devoted to the description of how this abduction is to occur. The plan is given to the Benjaminites by the other Israelites, which makes them appear in a bad light, since they just went to war to avenge the rape of the Levite's concubine, and now they plot group abduction of their own daughters. The Roman kidnapping is planned by the Romans, and apparently by Romulus himself. The Romans will abduct Sabine girls at a festive setting in Rome.
5) *A festival is chosen as the time of the abduction.* The wine festival at Shiloh is chosen as the time, and the girls at Shiloh will be dancing when they are seized. The occasion at Rome is a religious celebration to which other people have been invited and it is described as a rather grand festival occasion.
6) *The victims are visitors*. Perhaps the girls at Shiloh are part of the pilgrim crowd that comes to Shiloh. The text is vague, perhaps implying that the girls are residents at Shiloh. Little attention is given to either their identity or their response to this subsequent outrage. The Sabines are clearly visitors in Rome along with other peoples from the surrounding area.

7) *Festive activity occurs at the time of seizure*. The girls at Shiloh are seized during their dancing at the wine festival. The Sabine women are seized after their families have been provided with very hospitable treatment during the days of celebration.
8) *A response will be given to the offended people whose daughters have been seized*. In the biblical text an actual statement is prepared to give to the victims' families. The Romans initially do not respond to the Sabines, but subsequently in the ensuing complex politics of the age, they do come to terms on the issue of the kidnapped women. In Livy's account the Romans do defend the matter by saying that they only took single women and they took them for the purpose of uniting the Roman and Sabine people.
9) *The seizure of the women is described dramatically*. The Benjaminites grab the women while they are dancing. The Romans simply run through the crowd at a pre-determined time when the sign is given to do so. The Roman seizure is described as being done randomly by most of the young men, but especially beautiful women were targeted ahead of time and taken for the senators. The text elaborates on how all of the Sabine women were unmarried, except for one, who was taken by accident.
10) *The women are kept as wives*. The biblical text tersely reports that they took them home. Roman texts elaborate upon how the women were taken home as wives, treated with respect, and came to love their husbands.
11) *The population problem thus is solved*. Although none of the texts explicitly say this, it is not necessary, for it becomes obvious that the problem has been solved.
12) *Ultimately there is some sort of resolution or acceptance of what has happened*. The biblical text describes how the tribe of Benjamin was rebuilt and the other tribes went to their homes, apparently satisfied that they had done the correct thing. The classical texts speak of the resolutions in making the women feel accepted and then tells the romantic tale of how the women later interceded between their new husbands and their families to prevent war because they loved both so much.

If we chart this outline with the texts, we can read the select portions of Judges 21 together with the classical authors Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) and Plutarch (46–120 CE). Even though Livy and Plutarch lived several centuries after the time we propose for the emergence of the biblical narrative, one may assume that they worked with received traditions, perhaps from earlier historians whose work might be lost. Therefore, a comparison to some degree may be justified, even though the biblical author certainly did not have the exact classical texts, which we possess.

Judges 21 read together with the classical authors Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) and Plutarch (46–120 CE)

Men need wives

Judg 21:15: "The people had compassion on Benjamin because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel".

Livy (History, I, 9, 1): "Rome was now strong enough to hold her own in war with any of the adjacent states; but owing to the want of women a single generation was likely to see the end of her greatness, since she had neither prospect of posterity at home nor the right of intermarriage with her neighbors".

Plutarch (Romulus, XIV, 2): "On the contrary, seeing his city filling up at once with aliens, few of whom had wives, while the greater part of them, being a mixed rabble of needy and obscure persons, were looked down upon and expected to have no strong cohesion".

Desire to correct the problem

Judg 21:16–17: "So the elders of the congregation said, 'What shall we do for wives for those who are left, since there are no women left in Benjamin?' And they said, 'There must be heirs for the survivors of Benjamin, in order that a tribe may not be blotted out from Israel'".

Livy (History I, 9, 2–4): "So, on the advice of the senate, Romulus sent envoys round among all the neighboring nations to solicit for the new people and the privilege of intermarrying…their neighbors should not be reluctant to mingle their stock and their blood with the Romans, who were as truly men as they were".

Plutarch (Romulus, XIV, 2): "and hoping to make the outrage an occasion for some sort of blending and fellowship with the Sabines after their women had been kindly entreated, he set his hand to the task, and in the following manner".

An alternative option has failed

Judg 21:18: "'Yet we cannot give any of our daughters to them as wives'. For the Israelites had sworn, 'cursed be anyone who gives a wife to Benjamin'".

Livy (History, I, 9, 5–6): "Nowhere did the embassy obtain a friendly hearing… This was a bitter insult to the young Romans",

Abduction is planned

Judg 21:19–21: "So they said, 'Look, the yearly festival of the Lord is taking place at Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah'. And they instructed the Benjaminites, saying,

> Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, and watch; when the young women of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and each of you carry off a wife for himself from the young women of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

Livy (History I, 9, 6): "Expressly to afford a fitting time and place for this, Romulus, concealing his resentment, made ready solemn games in honor of the equestrian Neptune, which he called Consualia".

Plutarch (Romulus, XIV, 3–5): "First, a report was spread abroad by him that he had discovered an altar of a certain god hidden underground…Now when this altar was discovered, Romulus appointed by proclamation a splendid sacrifice upon it, with games, and a spectacle open to all people. And many were the people who came together, while he himself sat in front, among his chief men, clad in purple. The signal that the time had come for the onslaught was to be his rising and folding his cloak and then throwing it round him again".

Festival setting

Judg 21:19: "So they said, 'Look, the yearly festival of the Lord is taking place at Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah'".

Livy (History I, 9, 7): "He then bade proclaim the spectacle to the surrounding peoples, and his subjects prepared to celebrate it with all the resources within their knowledge and power, that they might cause the occasion to be noised abroad and eagerly expected".

Plutarch (Romulus XIV, 3–4): "First a report was spread abroad by him that he had discovered an altar of a certain god hidden underground…Now when this altar was discovered, Romulus appointed by proclamation a splendid sacrifice upon, with games, and a spectacle open to all people".

Victims are visitors

Judg 21:23 (possibly the dancing women are pilgrims)

Livy (History I, 9, 7–9): "He then bade proclaim the spectacle to the surrounding peoples, … The Sabines, too, came with all their people, including their children and wives".

Plutarch (Romulus XIV, 4): (Sabines are invited to a sacrifice). "And many were the people who came together".

Festive behavior occurs

Judg 21:21: "when the young women of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances".

Livy (History, I, 9, 9): "They (Sabines) were hospitably entertained in every house".

Plutarch (Romulus, XIV, 4): "Now when this altar was discovered, Romulus appointed by proclamation a splendid sacrifice upon it, with games, and a spectacle open to all people. And many were the people who came together, while he himself sat in front, among his chief men, clad in purple".

Response is prepared

Judg 21:22: Then if their fathers or their brothers come to complain to us, we will say to them, "Be generous and allow us to have them; because we did

not capture in battle a wife for each man. But neither did you incur guilt by giving your daughters to them".

Livy (History, xiv, 6): "And this was the strongest defense which Romulus could make, namely that they took only one married woman, Hersilia, and her by mistake, since they did not commit the rape out of wantonness, nor even with a desire to do mischief, but with the fixed purpose of uniting and blending the two peoples in the strongest bonds".

Plutarch (Romulus): (Romans give no response to Sabine parents initially but later enter into negotiation over numerous issues.)

Abduction occurs

Judg 21:23: "The Benjaminites did so; they took wives for each of them from the dancers whom they abducted".

Livy (History I, 9, 10–11): "At a given signal the young Romans darted this way and that, to seize and carry off the maidens. In most cases these were taken by the men in whose path they chanced to be. Some, of exceptional beauty, had been marked out for the chief senators, and were carried off to their houses by plebians to whom the office had been entrusted".

Plutarch (Romulus XIV, 5–6): "Armed with swords, then, many of his followers kept their eyes intently upon him, and when the signal was given, drew their swords, rushed in with shouts, and ravished away the daughters of the Sabines, but permitted and encouraged the men to escape. Some say that only thirty maidens were seized, and that from these the Curiae were named; but Valerius Antias puts the number at five hundred and twenty-seven, and Juba at six hundred and eighty-three, all maidens".

They kept them as wives

Judg 21:23: "Then they went and returned to their territory, and rebuilt the towns, and lived in them".

Livy (History I, 9, 14–15): "Nevertheless, the daughters should be wedded and become co-partners in all the possessions of the Romans, in their citizenship and, dearest privilege of all to the human race, in their children".

Plutarch (Romulus, XIV, 6): "And this was the strongest defense which Romulus could make, namely that they took only one married woman, Hersilia, and her by mistake, since they did not commit the rape out of wantonness, nor even with a desire to do mischief, but with the fixed purpose of uniting and blending the two peoples in the strongest bonds".

This solves population problem for men

Judg 21:23: "Then they went and returned to their territory, and rebuilt the towns, and lived in them".

Livy (History I, 9): (Roman men now have wives)
Plutarch (Romulus XIV): (Roman men now have wives)

Resolution is acceptable

Judg 21:23–24: (23) "Then they went and returned to their territory, and rebuilt the towns, and lived in them. (24) So the Israelites departed from there at that time by tribes and families, and they went out from there to their own territories".

Livy (History I, 9, 15–16): "A sense of injury had often given place to affection, and they would find their husbands the kinder for this reason, that every man would earnestly endeavor not only to be a good husband, but also to console his wife for the home and parents she had lost. His arguments were seconded by the wooing of the men, who excused their act on the score of passion and love, the moving of all pleas to a woman's heart". (Livy, *History* I, 13, 1–8: Sabine women prevent war between Romans and Sabines.)

Plutarch (Romulus, XVI, 1–8; XVII, 1–5; XVIII, 1–7; XIX, 1–7): (Resolution of situation between Romans and Sabines, including intervention by the Sabine women to keep both parties from fighting.)

Susan Ackerman has pointed out some other similarities that appear to connect the accounts, even though the texts do not directly say anything about these issues. Both narratives have the themes of pedophilia, voyeurism, and tragic marriage subliminally in the narratives. The dancing maidens are virgins, hence very young girls, and the men are soldiers, probably including men of a much older age. This is very true in the biblical account, and it is possible in the Roman account. In both accounts the men obviously view the maidens secretly, deciding which one each of them will seize and keep. A common theme in ancient classical literature is the tragedy for the young girl of being married, sometimes unwillingly being assigned by her family, and thus losing the joy of childhood for the subservience to a man probably older than herself (Ackerman 1998: 254–55). Certainly, to be abducted as the prelude to marriage has to be incredibly humiliating for the women, despite what the Roman narrative says about the later acceptance by the Sabine women of their husbands. Thus, the biblical account and the Roman account are united by some deep psychological themes.

Messenian men kidnap Lacedaemonian maidens at Limnae

There is a third narrative, the classical account of how the men of Messenia under the leadership of Aristomenes kidnapped the Lacedaemonian maidens at Limnae in Laconia at the shrine of Artemis Caryae in Limnae, which was shared by the Messenians and the Lacedaemonians. The young maidens were taken to a village in Messinia where some of the men got drunk and raped some of the women, and Aristomenes subsequently executed the worst offenders. The women ultimately were ransomed. The act was part of warlike activity and it led to greater war

between Messenia and Sparta. This narrative is recalled for us in Pausanias in three different short texts (*Messenia*, 4, 2; 16, 9–10; 31, 3; cf. Jones and Ormerod 1966: 188–89, 260–63, and 340–41) and by Strabo in one short text (*Geographia* vii, 4, 9; cf. Jones 1927: 120–21). Though Pausanias and Strabo give us very little story-line; nonetheless, we can sense this narrative is different from both the biblical account and the Sabine women narrative in several ways. From Pausanias we discern the following differences:

1) A battle occurred at the shrine between the Messenians and the Lacedaemonians in which the Lacedaemonian king, Teleclus, was killed (*Messenia* 4, 2; 31, 3).
2) The attack on the shrine and the seizure of the girls was in lieu of a direct attack on Sparta, so it was an act of war (*Messenia* 16, 9).
3) Only the wealthiest and the noblest girls were seized (*Messenia* 16, 9).
4) The women were not kept as wives, they were ransomed (*Messenia* 16, 10).
5) There was no problem with unmarried men requiring wives.
6) Some of the women were raped, and the violators were executed by the commander (*Messenia* 16, 10).

From Strabo we learn of the following differences (*Geographia* viii, 4, 9):

1) The women went to the shrine for the purpose of sacrificing, not dancing, and
2) the abduction led directly to a war between Sparta and Messenia.

Thus, there are a number of differences between the Messenian abduction and both the biblical and the Roman accounts. This Messenian story is similar to the biblical account and the "Rape of the Sabine Women" only in that the abduction was planned and occurred at a festival. It is very similar to the biblical account in that the maidens were abducted while performing dances in honor of Artemis at Caryae (Pausanias, *Messenia* 16, 9). But these similarities are outweighed by the differences. In general, one could suggest that the Messenian story differs so much from the other two accounts as to justify leaving it out of the comparison. The only point worth mentioning is that the maidens were engaging in ritual dances according to Pausanias, and perhaps our biblical author might have been sufficiently familiar with this detail so as to add that motif to the biblical account about the Shiloh festival. Let us recall the instances in classical texts where a single woman is kidnapped while dancing at a shrine. One might add that the motif about girls dancing at the festival of Shiloh is nowhere else mentioned in the biblical text, so one becomes suspicious as to whether this motif might be borrowed from Greek culture. The reference to the festival at Shiloh as a wine festival surfaces again only in 1 Samuel 1. Maybe we should not make a big issue about the lack of references to dancing at this festival, for in general, little seems to be said about things that transpired at this festival, or, for that matter, other festivals as well. If so, then one is led to suggest that the biblical author has primarily used the plot of the Roman "Rape of the Sabine Women" and added to it the motif from the

Greek Messenian abduction account or other classical texts. That, however, is very speculative and very subjective, though it is an interesting suggestion. We are faced with the problem of the late date for Pausanias in the second century CE (Strabo is dated to the first century BCE), which demands that we suggest an earlier tradition used by Pausanias might have been available to our biblical author.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the argument that there is a literary connection between the biblical account of the "Shiloh Abduction" and the "Rape of the Sabine Women" is difficult to make in an absolute sense, since the actual language is quite different. The similarity lies in the coincidence of the stories, and the significant number of continuities between the plot of the biblical narrative and the classical sources. Hence, I do not suggest a literary dependence upon texts, for the lateness of Livy and Plutarch would clearly preclude that argument. Rather, I suggest that in some way the biblical author was familiar with an earlier version of the tradition known to Livy and Plutarch. This version inspired the biblical author to craft the particular account. This further suggests to me that the most likely time for the biblical author to have become familiar with the plot would have been the late Persian or Hellenistic era. One could at least argue that familiarity with the story of the Sabine women could not have occurred for the biblical author prior to the mid-eighth century BCE, when the Roman story is set. One could logically argue that familiarity with the story of the Sabine women would have to be at some point after the story of the Sabine women had arisen in folkloristic form, as it now appears in Livy and Plutarch. This at least pushes us to a post-exilic date in Jewish history. Therefore, if indeed the author of Judges 21 was familiar with the account of the "Rape of the Sabine Women", it becomes a potential indicator that the literary segment or "Anhang" at the end of the book of Judges was inserted at a later date than the rest of the book and rest of the Deuteronomistic History. This implies to me that sections in the Deuteronomistic History, such as Judges 13–16, Judges 17–21, and 2 Samuel 21–23 may be evaluated by commentators by recourse to classical literature.

Notes

1 This essay was originally published as "Abducted Wives: A Hellenistic Narrative in the Book of Judges?", *SJOT* 22 (2007): 272–285.
2 Niels Peter Lemche (1985; 1988); Giovanni Garbini (1988); Philip Davies (1992); and, especially, Jan-Wim Wesselius (2002) sees parallels between Herodotus and narratives in the Primary History.
3 Wesselius (1999); John Strange (2000); Katherine Stott (2002); Lemche (2003); and Gerhard Larsson (2004).
4 Margalith (1966; 1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1987).
5 Margalith (1986a); cf. Steve Weitzman (2002: 168), who believes the riddle is inspired by the eighth century BCE riddle about figs and pigs by Mopsus in Asia Minor.
6 George Foote Moore (1903: 451); C. F. Burney (1920: 492); Theodore Gaster (1975: 445); Robert Boling (1975: 294), and Philippe Wajdenbaum (2011: 232–33).

7 Alice Bach (1998); Mario Liverani (2004: 179), believes this recalls a meeting at Shiloh where tribes exchanged women as wives with other tribes.
8 *Livy: History of Rome, Books I–II*, trans. by Foster (1919: 32–51); *Plutarch's Lives* vol. 1, trans. by Perrin (1914: 126–51). *Ovid, Fasti*, trans. by Boyle and Woodard (2000: 30), who note that Ovid refers poetically and vaguely to this event in *Fasti* 2, lines 139–40.

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4 From prison to prestige

The hero who helps a king in Jewish and Greek literature[1]

The Jew in the foreign court

The romantic image of a Jewish boy or girl in the court of a foreign king, where circumstances are threatening but can also be rewarding, is an image that graces the plot in several of our biblical books. Joseph, Daniel, and Esther all serve, survive, and find success in the court of foreign kings. Scholars have suggested that this delightful motif provided Jews with more than entertaining tales. The stories spoke a message of hope, which declared that Jews could serve foreign kings and bring help or salvation to their own people, as well as helping foreigners. Joseph prevented starvation from plaguing the Egyptians and the sons of Jacob, Daniel saved Jews and some Babylonians from the wrath of kings, and Esther saved her people from annihilation in a planned pogrom. This dual message—you may serve the foreign leaders and you may save your own people in this endeavor—was probably an inspiration for those Jews who might have performed such services for political leaders, as the fictional Mordecai did in the book of Esther, and it could give consolation for many average Jews who could feel as though they no longer had to live in an antagonistic relationship to the world and people around them. Or at least this would be the state of affairs until the Maccabean revolution; then a new set of rules would apply and a new genre of literature would emerge in which Jews had to fight for their very survival (Daniel 3, 6; Judith; 1–4 Maccabees).

Scholars in the past generation have evaluated these "courtly tales", and in particular, the motif of the Jewish hero or wise person who serves the foreign king and saves his or her people.[2] Lawrence Wills also included stories told by Herodotus in his evaluation of these courtly tales, which provides more evidence that such a literary genre exists and lends credence to the scope of this article.[3] Other scholars have paid special attention to individuals like Joseph and Daniel, who function in the court of a foreign king as dream interpreters, as well as an additional figure, Simon the Essene in the writings of Josephus (*War* 2.112–113; *Ant* 17.345–348) (Gnuse 1990; 1996: 86–92, 131–33, 193–94). In these tales there is the added dimension that the Jewish hero can accomplish something in terms of dream interpretation that foreign wise men cannot accomplish, for the foreigners lack the prophetic skills bequeathed by God to the Jewish hero. This narrative

image not only implies that a Jewish youth can survive and thrive in a foreign setting, but it also mocks the foreign king and his intellectual establishment for their inability to do what the simple Jewish youth can accomplish. However, there are other ways to reflect upon this literature in critical fashion.

Hellenistic romances and Jewish novels

In an excellent article about narrative accounts concerning Old Testament prophets and healers or savior figures in the classical world, Cristiano Grottanelli spoke of a new powerful literary theme in these stories that attributed charismatic leadership no longer to kings but to popular leaders among the people who were in possession of special skills. Among his many interesting insights, he made some allusive comments regarding the similarities between Herodotus' account of Democedes of Croton in *Histories* 3:125–137 and the Joseph narrative in Genesis 41 (Grottanelli 1999a: 131–33). He maintained that there was a common narrative format about a healer or diviner, who was either in prison or despised by the king, who had to be brought forth to aid the king in dealing with a crisis. These accounts especially reflected the new direction of first millennium BCE thought that attributed charismatic or divine powers to individuals outside the royal court. This reversed older royal politico-religious ideologies of the Bronze Age which apotheosized kings as divine or at least representatives of the gods, and thus attributed to them absolute power in society (Grottanelli 1999a).

The Aramaic *Ahikar* tale, the Vita Aesop or Aesop Romance, and the Joseph story

In another insightful article, Grottanelli traced narrative story patterns in other Aramaic and Hellenistic novella that bore similarities to the Joseph story, and these patterns he traced out in greater detail. In particular, he observed a common pattern shared by the Aramaic *Ahikar* tale, the *Vita Aesop* or *Aesop Romance*, and the Joseph story.[4] According to Grottanelli, in all three novella the hero is:

1) a slave (Ahikar is the king's servant, Aesop is a slave, and Joseph is a slave later in the Joseph narrative when he is in Egypt.),
2) who advises the king or important official (Ahikar serves an Assyrian king, Aesop serves an Egyptian ruler, and later in the Joseph narrative, Joseph advises pharaoh.),
3) who is unjustly accused (Ahikar is accused by his nephew, Aesop is accused by the Delphians for stealing a cup, and Joseph is accused of arrogance by his brothers and subsequently is accused of seduction by Potiphar's wife.),
4) hated (Ahikar is hated by the king, Aesop falls from favor likewise, and Joseph's brothers despise him for his dreams.),
5) imprisoned (Ahikar and Aesop are both in prison, and Joseph is first in a pit and later in prison in Egypt.),

6) sentenced to die (Ahikar and Aesop are sentenced to death, and Joseph is thrown in the pit to die.),
7) almost killed—his death is faked (A slave is killed in Ahikar's place, Aesop is hidden in an empty tomb by Hermippus, the official charged to execute him, and Jacob receives Joseph's bloody coat to suggest his death.),
8) a problem arises (A problem exists for kings in all three stories.),
9) hero is sought by the king (He is an Assyrian king for Ahikar, and Egyptian for both Aesop and Joseph.),
10) hero appears (All three come forth from confinement.),
11) hero advises the king (Ahikar gives sage advice, Aesop solves riddles, and Joseph interprets dreams.), and
12) hero is exalted by the king (All three are freed and given rewards.).

We should observe that the Joseph story has the twist of having the hero twice imprisoned, once by his brothers in the pit and once in the Egyptian prison.[5] Grottanelli also notes the theme of the "cup" planted on a person, which is designed to lead to his arrest. (Aesop is thus tricked by the Delphians, who then arrest and try to execute him; and Joseph does this to Benjamin to test the other brothers.)

The Adventures of Chaireas and Callirhoe and the Joseph story

Grottanelli further observes a significant number of similarities between the Joseph story and a Hellenistic Romance called *The Adventures of Chaireas and Callirhoe*, to which he gives more attention than the previous comparison. These include:

1) jealously (A jealous Chaireas hits his wife, Callirhoe; Joseph's brothers despise him for his dreams.),
2) apparent death (Chaireas thinks he killed her; brothers decide to kill Joseph.),
3) entombment (Callirhoe is buried in a tomb; Joseph is in a pit.),
4) hero is removed (Tomb robbers kidnap Callirhoe; Joseph is sold as a slave.),
5) slave status (Callirhoe is a slave in Asia Minor; Joseph is in Egypt.),
6) powerful master owns hero (Callirhoe's owner in Asia Minor and Potiphar in Egypt own them respectively.),
7) empty tomb (Chaireas finds the tomb empty; a brother finds Joseph gone.),
8) desperation (Chaireas and Joseph's brother are desperate over the disappearance.),
9) love (Callirhoe is loved by her master; Joseph is almost seduced.),
10) response (Callirhoe marries her master; Joseph refuses seduction.),
11) court (Callirhoe travels to the Persian court; Joseph serves pharaoh.),
12) advancement (Callirhoe is respected by the Persian king: Joseph is promoted by pharaoh.),
13) reunion (Chaireas and Callirhoe meet; Joseph sees his brothers.),
14) forgiveness (Everyone forgives everyone.),

15) happy ending (Everyone is happy.), and
16) return home (Chaireas and Callirhoe return home; Joseph's bones go to Palestine during the exodus.).

Grottanelli believes that these stories depend upon narratives, lost to us, which emerged in the east Mediterranean world in the early first millennium BCE (Grottanelli 1999b: 150–60).

Joseph and Democedes in Herodotus

We need to pay increased attention to Greek literature, or as John Van Seters would call it, the "Western Antiquarian" tradition, to distinguish it from the "Eastern Antiquarian" tradition of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Syria. His work has demonstrated the value of utilizing literature from both traditions to understand biblical texts, especially in the Primary History of Genesis through 2 Kings (Van Seters 1992). With this in mind, the similarity between the tales of Chaireas and Callirhoe and the Joseph story is significant. Grottanelli has made excellent observations here, upon which we can build. But the entire scenario of Joseph being unjustly accused, imprisoned, being called forth from pharaoh's prison, interpreting his dreams when others have failed, and being exalted are missing in this comparison. At this point it appears as though the author of the Joseph story fell back on the plot mentioned by Grottanelli in connection with the narratives about Aesop and Ahikar. But even at this point one must acknowledge the creative differences found in the Joseph story. If we follow Grottanelli's categories, we must observe that Joseph is a slave and advises the king only in the latter part of the story, especially if many of the matching categories correspond to the treatment of Joseph by his brothers early in the Joseph story. Joseph is hated, imprisoned, sentenced to die, and almost dies at the hands of his brothers; subsequently he is unjustly accused and imprisoned because of Potiphar's wife. Thus, the categories are creatively reworked in the Joseph story. Also, the Joseph story dwells more upon the scenario of Joseph solving the dream riddles for the king and being rewarded, whereas Ahikar and Aesop spend little time on that part of the plotline.

Let us then return to Grottanelli's allusive observations about similarities between Democedes in Herodotus and Joseph. By reflecting upon the accounts of Democedes and Joseph in greater detail than Grottanelli had done, I became intrigued by the incredible similarity of the format found in both of these stories. I am convinced that there is a specific type of narrative that both the Democedes and the Joseph stories have in common, or perhaps that the account recalled by Herodotus has somehow shaped the biblical author's presentation of Joseph's experience before pharaoh in Genesis 41. The commonalities shared by the stories of Democedes and Joseph are greater than those motifs shared by the Joseph narrative with the stories of Ahikar and Aesop.

Scholars oft have pointed out that the report of Joseph's dream interpretation in the court of pharaoh has shaped the Daniel accounts in Dan 2, 4, 5.[6] Therefore, for purposes of comparison I shall bring into consideration all five reports to

demonstrate how they conform to this intriguing plot sequence. But it should be noticed that the account of Democedes in Herodotus' *Histories*, Book 3:125, 129–137 and Genesis 41 share much more in common with each other than with the related narratives in Daniel.

For those unfamiliar with the tale of Democedes, it may be summarized as follows:

Democedes was a famous physician who served the tyrant, Polycrates of Samos. When Polycrates sailed to Magnesia with his compatriots, Polycrates was killed and his compatriots were taken prisoner. Later Democedes was taken to a prison in Susa in Persia. When the king of Persia, Darius I, could not be healed by his physicians, Democedes was brought out of prison to heal him. Though denying his medical skills at first, Democedes finally cured the king and was rewarded and even introduced to two of the wives of the king. Democedes also interceded to save the lives of the Egyptian doctors who had failed. Though he served Darius for a time, he finally escaped while he was on a journey back in Turkey.

Classical scholars have observed that this narrative probably was collected by Herodotus from people in Crotan, a Greek colony in Italy, when he stayed there. The narrative combines actual historical memories of Democedes with "folk-tale elements" (Hart 1982: 77). Such "folk tale elements" may be a narrative form about a prison inmate who comes forth to do wondrous things for the king.

Likewise, Joseph was unfairly imprisoned and forgotten, but eventually called forth to interpret the dreams of pharaoh that had puzzled other diviners. Joseph is freed, rewarded, given a wife, and made a co-ruler in Egypt. As the following outline below will demonstrate, there are numerous specific details that the two narratives share. This formatted outline was generated primarily from the account of Democedes (except for item #17) and the biblical narratives were aligned with it: 1) hero in prison, 2) king requires someone with skills, 3) king calls his specialists, 4) specialists fail, 5) king learns that hero has reputation for that skill, 6) hero has been forgotten, 7) hero appears before the king, 8) hero denies having the skill, 9) king rejects hero's denial, 10) hero engages in his skilled activity, 11) king's dilemma is solved, 12) hero is praised, 13) hero receives money and/or power, 14) hero receives a woman or meets women, 15) hero is freed from prison and leads a good life, 16) hero saves the endangered specialists, and 17) hero helps rule the kingdom.

Textual comparison of Herodotus, *Histories* 3, Genesis 39–41, and the Daniel accounts

The format below follows the plotline in Herodotus. The parallels with Genesis 41 not only indicate the similar plot of these two stories, but perhaps might suggest some relationship between them. The three Daniel accounts also follow the basic plot, thus implying their use of the same common story line, but they differ in several ways from Herodotus' story and the Joseph narrative. This only reinforces the impression of the special connection between the stories of Democedes and Joseph.

Hero is in prison or is endangered by misfortune

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:125, 129:

> Polycrates of Samos unwisely sailed to Magnesia with a number of followers, including Democedes of Crotona, son of Calliphon, and a most skilled physician. When Polycrates was murdered by Oroetes, presumably Democedes was imprisoned (3:125). He was subsequently taken to Susa in Persia, when the slaves and possessions of Oroetes were taken to Susa after Oroetes' death (3:129).

Genesis 39:20:

> "And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison".

Daniel 2:13b:

> "and they looked for Daniel and his companions, to execute them". (This occurs after the wise men have failed to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and he calls for all wise men to be killed.)

Daniel 4:

> (This does not happen to Daniel.)

Daniel 5:

> (This does not happen to Daniel.)

King requires someone with special skills

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:129:

> "Not long after this, it happened that Darius, while hunting, twisted his foot in dismounting from his horse, so violently that the ball of the ankle joint was dislocated from its socket".

Genesis 41:1–8a:

> (Two years later pharaoh has two dreams: a dream of seven fat and seven thin cows, followed by a dream of seven thick and seven thin ears of corn. When he awoke, "his spirit was troubled", v.7.)

Daniel 2:1:

> "In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed such dreams that his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him".

Daniel 4:5:

> "I saw a dream that frightened me; my fantasies in bed and the visions of my heard terrified me".

Daniel 5:6:

> "Then the king's face turned pale, and his thought terrified him. His limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together".

King calls for his specialists

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:129:

> "Darius called in the first physicians of Egypt, whom he had till now kept near his person";

Genesis 41:8b:

> "so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men".

Daniel 2:2–3:

> (2) So the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. When they came in and stood before the king, (3) he said to them, "I have had such a dream that my spirit is troubled by the desire to understand it".

Daniel 4:6:

> "So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, in order that they might tell me the interpretation of the dream".

Daniel 5:7:

> The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners; and the king said to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever can read this writing and tell me its interpretation shall be clothed in purple, have a chain of gold around his neck, and rank third in the kingdom".

King's specialists fail

Herodotus, *Histories* 3: 129:

> "who, by their forcible wrenching of the foot, did but make the hurt worse; and for seven days and nights the king could get no sleep for the pain".

Genesis 41:8c:

> "Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh".

Daniel 2:4–11:

> (The interpreters ask the king to tell them the dream, but the king demands that they tell him the dream and its interpretation. When they say they cannot do this, the king again makes the same demand.)

Daniel 4:7:

> "Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not tell me its interpretation".

Daniel 5:8:

> "Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king the interpretation".

King learns that hero has reputation for that skill

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:129:

> "On the eighth day he was in very evil case; then someone, who had heard in Sardis of the skill of Democedes of Croton, told the king of him".

Genesis 41:9–13:

> (9) Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "I remember my faults today. (10) Once Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard. (11) We dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. (12) A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each according to his dream. (13) As he interpreted to us, so it turned out; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged".

Daniel 2:16:

> "So Daniel went in and requested that the king give him time and he would tell the king the interpretation" (Nebuchadnezzar already knows Daniel).

Daniel 4:

> (Motif lacking, since the king already knew Daniel).

Daniel 5:11–12:

> (11) There is a man in your kingdom who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father he was found to have enlightenment, understanding, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and diviners, (12) because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.

Hero has been forgotten

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:129:

> "Finding the physician somewhere all unregarded and forgotten among Oroetes' slaves".

Genesis 41:1:

> "After two years."

Daniel 2:

> (This is not true for Daniel.)

Daniel 4:

> (This is not true for Daniel.)

Daniel 5:10–12:

> (The queen has to explain to the new king who Daniel is, so he has been forgotten in a certain sense.)

Hero appears before the king

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:129–130:

> (129) "…they dragged him forth, dragging his chains and clad in rags. (130) When he came before the king".

Genesis 41:14:

> "Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was hurriedly brought out of the dungeon. When he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh".

Daniel 2:25:

> "Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him: 'I have found among the exile from Judah a man who can tell the king the interpretation'".

Daniel 4:8:

> "At last Daniel came in before me."

Daniel 5:13a:

> "Then Daniel was brought in before the king".

Hero denies having the skill

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> "Darius asked him if he had knowledge of his art, Democedes denied it, for he feared that by revealing the truth about himself he would wholly be cut off from Hellas".

Genesis 41:15–16:

> (15) And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it". (16) Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not I; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer".

Daniel 2:26–28a:

> (26) The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to tell me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation"? (27) Daniel answered the king, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or diviners can show to the king the mystery that the king is asking, (28) but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days".

Daniel 4:

> (Daniel does not deny his skill.)

Daniel 5:

> (Daniel does not deny the skill, he does, however, refuse the reward that comes with the correct interpretation of the sign.)

King rejects hero's denial

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> Darius saw clearly that he was using craft to hide his knowledge, and bade those who led him to bring out scourges and goads for him. Then Democedes confessed, in so far as to say that his knowledge was not exact; but he had consorted (he said) with a physician and thereby gained some poor acquaintance with the art.

Genesis 41:

> (This does not happen in Joseph Narrative.)

Daniel 2:

> (This does not happen in the Daniel account.)

Daniel 4:9:

> (Even though Daniel does not deny his skill, the king does praise him as being "endowed with a spirit of the holy gods" and "no mystery is too difficult for you".)

Daniel 5:

> (This does not happen.)

Hero engages in his skilled activity

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> "Darius then entrusting the matter to him, Democedes applied Greek remedies and used gentleness instead of the Egyptians' violence".

Genesis 41:17–36:

> (Pharaoh tells Joseph the two dreams [vv. 17–24a], mentions that his magicians failed to interpret it [v. 24b]. Joseph then interprets the dream using classic ancient Near East oneirocritical skills of visual and verbal correspondence [vv. 25–31]. Joseph then tells pharaoh that the dream is fixed because it has been doubled [v. 32] and then provides advice on what to do in view of the impending famine [vv. 33–36].)

Daniel 2:28b–45:

> (Daniel tells the king what his dream was, and then he interprets the various body parts of the statue to refer to successive empires in the future.)

Daniel 4:19–27:

> (Daniel interprets the dream of the tree which was cut down.)

Daniel 5:24–28:

> (Daniel interprets the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.)

King's dilemma is solved

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> "whereby he made the king able to sleep and in a little while recovered him of his hurt, though Darius had had no hope of regaining the use of his foot".

Genesis 41:37:

> "The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants".

Daniel 2:47:

> "The king said to Daniel, 'Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery'"!

Daniel 4:

> (This is not directly mentioned, though it did happen.)

Daniel 5:

> (This is not directly mentioned, though it did happen.)

Hero is praised

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:

> (Darius does not directly praise Democedes.)

Genesis 41:38–39:

> (38) Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God"? (39) So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you".

Daniel 2:46:

> "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, worshipped Daniel, and commanded that a grain offering and incense be offered to him".

Daniel 4:9:

> (Hero is praised before he interprets the dream.) "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery is too difficult for you".

Daniel 5:

> (The king does not directly praise Daniel.)

Hero receives money and/or power

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> "After this, Darius rewarded him with a gift of two pairs of golden fetters. 'Is it then your purpose,' Democedes asked, 'to double my pains for my making you whole?'"

Genesis 41:41–44:

> (41) And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt". (42) Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph's hand; he arrayed him in garments of find linen, and put a gold chain around his neck. (43) He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command; and they cried out in front of him, "Bow the knee"! Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. (44) Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt".

Daniel 2:48:

> "Then the king promoted Daniel, gave him many great gifts".

Daniel 4:

> (This is not mentioned.)

Daniel 5:29:

> "Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed in purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made concerning him that he should rank third in the kingdom".

Hero receives a woman or meets women

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:130:

> Darius, pleased by his wit, sent him to the king's wives, saying, "This is he who saved the king's life"; whereupon each of them took a vessel and, scooping with it from a chest full of gold, so richly rewarded the physician that the servant, whose name was Sciton, collected a very great sum of gold by following and gleaning the states that fell from the vessels.

Genesis 41:45:

> "Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphar, priest of On, as his wife. Thus Joseph gained authority over the land of Egypt".

Daniel 2:

> (This does not happen for Daniel.)

Daniel 4:

> (This did not happen for Daniel.)

Daniel 5:

> (This does not happen for Daniel.)

Hero is freed from prison and leads a good life

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:132:
(This appears after a digression about Democedes' previous life.)

> "So now for having healed Darius at Susa, Democedes had a very great house and ate at the king's table; all was his, except only permission to return to his Greek home".

Genesis 41:46:

> "Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt".

Daniel 2:49b:

> "But Daniel remained at the king's court".

Daniel 4:

> (Daniel's previous status continued.)

Daniel 5:

> (Nothing is directly mentioned with this new king.)

Hero saves the endangered specialists

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:132:

> "When the Egyptian chirurgeons who had till now attended on the king were about to be impaled for being less skillful than a Greek, Democedes begged their lives of the king and save them".

Genesis 41:

> (This does not happen.)

Daniel 2:12–13a:

> (12) "Because of this the king flew into a violent rage and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. (13) The decree was issued, and the wise men were about to be executed";

Daniel 4:

> (This does not happen.)

Daniel 5:

> (This does not happen.)

Hero helps rule the kingdom

Herodotus, *Histories* 3:

> (Democedes does not do this.)

Genesis 41:46b–49, 53–57:

> (Joseph assumes responsibility for administration of the grain storage and dispensation during the years of plenty and the subsequent years of famine.)

Daniel 2:48b:

> "and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon".

Daniel 4:

> (Daniel's previous status continues.)

Daniel 5:

(Since Babylon falls to Darius the Mede, this does not happen.)

As we consider this outline, some interesting observations can be made. Most significant, in my opinion, is the great similarity between the account in Herodotus and Genesis 41. Both of these accounts stand in contrast to the three narratives in Daniel 2, 4, and 5 on several points. This is in spite of the conclusion of many scholars that the stories of Daniel have been influenced greatly by the narratives of Joseph in Genesis 41, especially in regard to the format of the dream reporting and dream interpretation. Indeed, Genesis 41, I believe, did influence the way the author of the Daniel narratives cast the story. Hence, the greater similarity that Genesis 41 displays with Herodotus' account of Democedes becomes rather impressive.

To summarize the similarities that Herodotus' account and Genesis 41 share in common, I list the following observations:

1) The "hero in prison" motif is found in Herodotus and Genesis 41, but is totally lacking in Daniel 2, 4, and 5.
2) The "forgotten hero" motif, found in Herodotus and Genesis 41, is missing in Daniel 2 and 4.
3) The "hero denies his skill" motif, found in Herodotus and Genesis 41, is missing in Daniel 4 and 5.
4) References to women encountered by the hero is totally lacking in Daniel 2, 4, and 5.
5) A distinct reference to the hero's release from prison, found in Herodotus and Genesis 41, is lacking in Daniel 2, 4, and 5.

These motifs tend to make Herodotus' story of Democedes and the account in Genesis 41 appear to be distinctly different narratives from the Daniel accounts reputedly influenced by Genesis 41. There are, however, some themes that run counter to this pattern. Herodotus and Daniel 2 both report that the hero intervened to save the specialists who had failed in their interpretation; this is lacking in Genesis 41. Genesis 41 and Daniel 2 both declare that the hero helped rule the land after his interpretative success; this is lacking in Herodotus. Also lacking in Herodotus is the distinct praise for the hero by the king recounted in Genesis 41 and Daniel 2 and 4. These similarities lead us to suspect that there are plot themes that unite these accounts. But, nevertheless, I am still impressed with the number and the significance of the themes common to Herodotus' tale of Democedes and the story of Joseph in Genesis 41. This leads me to suspect that there is a link between them, though that would be most difficult to prove.

Significance of the Jewish and Greek stories

More importantly, we can talk about the meaning of these stories for their respective audiences. If we look at both the Jewish and the Greek stories together, it can

give some insight into the meaning that these accounts had for their respective audiences. We can intuit some additional aspects of the reader response to the entertaining tales when we take into consideration both the Jewish and the Greek contexts in which the stories were told.

The stories exemplify the yearning of underdogs, the desires of those who are ruled, oppressed, or at least under political, economic, and cultural pressure from a major world power to triumph in some way over those who have power. With the biblical stories this is obvious: the stories of Joseph and Daniel reflect the frustration of Jews in the post-exilic period as they are ruled by Persians or Greeks. But what about the story in a Greek context? Did not the Greeks defeat the armies of Darius I (490 BCE) and Xerxes I (480–479 BCE) at Marathon, Salamis, and Platea? But nonetheless, many Greeks in Ionia chafed under Persian rule, and even the Greeks in Greece itself had to see the tremendous threat of the overweening empire of Persia. The Persian Empire was the first outside empire that had extensive dealings with the Greeks, and it put tremendous pressure on Greeks and Greek culture for many years. Thus, Greek authors showed tremendous interest in the Persians, more so than in any other neighboring culture (Momigliano 1971: 123–50). Both Jews and Greeks "had constantly to refer to the reality of the Persian Empire" (Momigliano 1994: 7).

Any story in which a Greek demonstrated superiority to a Persian, especially a Persian ruler, would be a welcome and entertaining account. Lawrence Wills believes that the accounts recalled by Herodotus about the captured Lydian king Croesus serving as an advisor to Cambyses were used by Lydians to affirm their role in Persian society and Greeks could view the Croesus stories subsequently in the same fashion (Wills 1990: 68, 150). In similar fashion, Joseph and Democedes both rose to success from their incarceration because they were talented, more so than the folk who waited upon the king directly.

Both Democedes and Joseph are cunning people who survive by their wits and prevail over people more powerful than themselves. Everyone loves the story of a clever person who survives and is successful.[7] Democedes is a rascal who serves the king but eventually runs from him. Joseph is also a bit of a rascal, as his tendency to lord over his brothers by telling them of his dreams (Genesis 37) indicates, and even more so, as his later deceptions so clearly demonstrate, when he seeks to discern their feelings by hiding his identity. But both Democedes and Joseph are successful, above all, when they use their wits and skills to attain positions of power in a royal court.

Commentators have pointed out for years that the court novella in the Jewish tradition spoke to post-exilic Jews and said to them that it was acceptable to serve foreign kings, if that brought well-being to other people, especially to Jews. This theme is certainly to be found in the Joseph Novella. Perhaps there is a hint of it in the Greek story, if we understand the Greek account to imply that service to a Persian monarch is acceptable, if thereby Greeks are helped. Over the years many Greeks did serve the Persian government in many ways, even though sometimes it was only to fight their own Greek rivals, if those rivals happened to be in an antagonistic relationship with the Persians.

More clearly, both accounts imply that the king is a fool, or at least he stands below the trickster hero in terms of cleverness and wits.[8] Democedes tries to deceive the king by pretending not to be a doctor. He fails at this ploy. But ultimately he escapes the reach of Darius when he travels back to Ionia on family business. Joseph does nothing to defy the pharaoh, but it is evident from the biblical author's perspective that Joseph is the one who is in touch with God, not the pharaoh. Did not pharaohs claim to be the living god, Horus? Underneath this account there is a subtle indication that Joseph, the good Jew, the prophet, is the one who really is intelligent and in touch with the divine. One is reminded of the story of the midwives in Exod 1:15–21, who tell pharaoh that Hebrew women are so superior to Egyptian women, they give birth to babies and then go to work before the midwives even arrive. The midwives play pharaoh for a fool to his face, and he does not even seem to realize it. Joseph gets pharaoh to acknowledge his Jewish god, thus denying his own pharaonic status.

Ultimately, both the Greeks and the Jews would declare, in this story and other stories told about their relationships to kings, that kings are inferior to the people. The wise peasant prevails in the court of the king, for the king is not the mighty and divine personage that propaganda would have us to believe. Mr. "everyman" may come into the court of the king, show wisdom or skill, and thus prevail. For the king is inferior to the masses, to the people. Both Greeks and Jews would say this. Greeks ultimately would express their undying hatred of tyrants in many ways, but especially in revolutions. Jews would oppose tyrannical kings in the words of the prophets and the judgment of the Deuteronomistic History under the aegis of a monotheistic faith in which all people stood as equals before one God.

For post-exilic Jews, who heard such short stories, the message would be proclaimed to them that the pagan king, whether Persian, Greek, or Roman, was still under God's rule. The Jews would be led to confess that their God was still in charge of the world, even though tyrants held sway. Jews in diaspora would hear the stories and "learn anew that no matter how cruel and menacing these pagan kings may appear, they are not greater than YHWH the Creator of all" (Kim 2007: 523).

Finally, the stories utter a word of hope. We, who are underdogs, can be successful. We can rise to power in the court of the mighty king, if we are clever, skilled, or resourceful. Kings are ultimately human, not divine, and sometimes they are fools. We, Greeks or Jews, who are intelligent, may prevail and be successful under them. The hero, the trickster, the underdog, ultimately gets those prizes that kings seek most: money and women. We, the tricksters, can prevail. Even if this did not really happen in "real time", it probably was a hope cherished and promoted in stories such as these.

Herodotus and Biblical narratives

If we dare to ask the question as to whether the author of one account perhaps was aware of the other account, which story would we assume was the template for the other? Would the Greek world have been familiar with Jewish literature? The

answer is probably no. Greeks "did not register the existence of the Jews. The little nation which was later to present the most radical challenge to the wisdom of the Greeks is mentioned nowhere in the extant pre-Hellenistic texts" (Momigliano 1971: 77). In his *History of Egypt*, written from 320 to 305 BCE, Hecataeus of Abdera wrote about the Jews because he believed other authors had ignored Jewish literature. Hecataeus noted about Jewish literature,

> that authors, poets and the common run of historians have failed to refer to these books and to the men who have lived and still live, in accordance with them: if they have been passed over in silence, that is not by chance, but because of the sacred matter that they contain
>
> (Canfora 1990: 21).

Even the translation of great Jewish literature, the Septuagint, was not quoted by them, and may not have been included even in the magnificently thorough library at Alexandria despite the testimony of Aristeas, according to some scholars (Momigliano 1971: 90–92). Was the Jewish world familiar with Greek culture, customs, and literature? Countless authors could be documented who have observed how Jews adapted Greek culture and ideas in manifold ways. Thus, one is tempted to consider foremost the possibility of how the author of the Joseph story might have adapted this tradition found in Herodotus. Did the biblical author learn of the tradition outside of Herodotus' work, or did our author have familiarity with Herodotus' work directly? That we cannot answer. But if we assume the latter option, then we are committed to dating the Joseph accounts later in the post-exilic era than heretofore we have done in the past.

Is there the possibility that Greek novella have influenced the biblical novella, and the Joseph narrative in particular? Grottanelli believes that such influence may have occurred, but he is more inclined to suggest that both Greek and biblical authors drew upon "a common repertoire of motifs and tales, widespread in an Eastern Mediterranean *koine*" (Grottanelli 1999b: 161).

But if we take Grottanelli's observation as the correct conclusion, then it is puzzling as to why there is such a great similarity between the account of Democedes in Herodotus and Genesis 41 over against all the other stories that are influenced by Grottanelli's hypothetical template. It is not that I deny the existence of the story form suggested by Grottanelli. I simply suspect that there is a significant connection between Democedes and Joseph, and that the similarities are not merely coincidence.

Herodotus obtained the story of Democedes while he resided in Croton in Italy. Presumably there is something behind the format that gives character to our present tale. The Joseph narrative is conceded by critical biblical scholars to be rather fictional, even though the narrative is colored by historical memory of customs in Egypt. We must, of course, assume that the Joseph Novella arose in the post-exilic era, so that Herodotus' writings would have been available to the author.[9] I am impressed by the arguments of Donald Redford, who suggests sixth to fifth century BCE Egypt as the setting for the language and the customs reflected

in the Joseph Novella, which then makes my analysis feasible (Redford 1970). Initially, one would suspect that the Joseph story, as fiction, could be more pliable in its initial creation, and thus more likely to conform to the Democedes narrative, if part of that recalls something historical. If we take this into consideration with the observation that Jews were more likely to adapt Greek customs, ideas, and literature than vice versa, one might be tempted to suggest that our biblical author may have crafted the Joseph scenario of dream interpretation for pharaoh with an awareness of Herodotus' account of Democedes. Ultimately, since both accounts are in different languages, it remains quite difficult to look for key words or expressions that might connect the two. Hence, my opinion concerning such a connection must remain suggestive. Nevertheless, there does appear to be at least a common format used to craft and shape both stories, and that can lead us to interesting observations about the meaning of both.

Several critical scholars have been willing to suggest that biblical authors were familiar with the writings of Herodotus. Elias Bickerman (1974) and John Van Seters (1983) were among the first to state that biblical scholars should compare biblical narratives with the writings of Herodotus. Sara Mandell and David Noel Freedman (1993) concluded that numerous parallels between the Primary History and writings of Herodotus imply that Herodotus knew some form of the biblical materials. Jan-Wim Wesselius (1999; 2000) observed parallels between the *Histories* of Herodotus and accounts in the Primary History about Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, and he concluded that the final biblical author was familiar with Herodotus. Flemming Nielsen (1997) considered the influence of Herodotus upon the Deuteronomistic History. Katherine Stott (2002) suggested parallels between Herodotus and narratives connected to King David in the books of Samuel. Paul Niskanen made an impressive argument for the influence of Herodotus upon the book of Daniel.[10] Other authors have sought parallels with biblical literature and Hellenistic literature in general.[11] Granted, their position remains a minority viewpoint. Nevertheless, given this recent attention to observing connections between biblical narratives and the *Histories* of Herodotus and Hellenistic literature in general, I am intrigued by the striking similarity of the stories of Democedes and Joseph.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether our biblical author was familiar with Herodotus' story or not, a comparison of these two accounts, as well as comparable tales, is an interesting endeavor. It tells us that there was a common interest among both Jews and Greeks in crafting narratives that might be termed "literature of resistance". This might not be so evident if we were to consider the narratives separately. But once we compare the accounts and sense the common plotline, we are struck even more by the image of the "underdog healer/interpreter" in the court of a foreign king, who can perform the task that the king's chosen servants cannot do. This leads us to suspect that there is political rhetoric in these stories designed to praise the skills of the people who tell the account and to denigrate those foreign folk who

are in an antagonistic relationship. Hence, we are led to conclude that there was a genre of such narratives, found in both Greek and Jewish communities, with perhaps some sharing of ideas and stories.

Popular stories, myths, and novella are told because they have an entertaining value. But all stories are told with some form of political and religious agenda to a greater or lesser degree. We certainly recognize that in the epic literature of the Old Testament. In the past, scholars have made observations about post-exilic Jewish novella, which fall into the genre of court stories, to the effect that they, too, have agenda designed to affirm the Jewish community as it survived in the greater cosmopolitan milieu of its age. Hopefully, these stories serve to direct our focus more clearly on a particular role of some of these stories as resistance literature. These accounts, the Joseph narrative in particular, do not advocate revolution or independence. They do, however, affirm the minority ethnic group by affirming their innate superiority over the ruling foreigners and by showing how a commoner can serve a foreign king.

Notes

1 This article was originally published as "From Prison to Prestige: The Hero Who Helps a King in Jewish and Greek Literature", *CBQ* 72 (2010): 31–45.
2 Arndt Meinhold (11971: 33–51, 1975; 1976); W. Lee Humphreys (1973); John Collins (1975); and Lawrence Wills (1990; 1995: 40–67, 93–131).
3 Wills (1990: 55–70) notes that Herodotus recounts such stories only from royal courts of absolute rulers in the East Mediterranean world or the Near East, thus explaining why such court tales are not found in classical or Roman authors.
4 Grottanelli (1999b). Grottanelli also sees parallels between the classical personage, Melampus, and Joseph (1976; 1999a: 132–33). I have expanded upon Grottanelli's observations by numbering the items, placing them in the sequence according to the plot, and adding most of the observations found in the parentheses.
5 Wills (1990: 52–55) also noticed this doubling in the Joseph narrative.
6 James Montgomery (1926: 185–86); Norman Porteous (1965: 38); Raymond Hammer (1976: 21, 25, 63); Louis Hartman and Alexander DiLella (1978: 56, 145–46, 151); Andre Lacocque (1979: xviii, 23, 26, 36, 44, 54); and John Collins (1993: 39–40).
7 Susan Niditch (2000: 93–145) discusses Joseph as a trickster with his dream interpretation.
8 Wills (1990: 69) observes that the theme of the "confused" king is common in court stories.
9 Paul Niskanen (2004: 1–25) states that we can consult Herodotus when reading the post-exilic novella, but we must be critical about his influence on the Primary History.
10 Niskanen (2004: 61, 150) believes that stories about Croesus as an adviser to Cambyses display affinity with the accounts in Daniel.
11 Gnuse (1998); John Strange (2002); Niels Peter Lemche (2003); and Gerhard Larsson (2004).

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5 Divine messengers in Genesis 18–19 and Ovid[1]

Romantic tales are told in both biblical and classical sources of divine beings appearing to humans for various reasons. Mercury was the guest of two women in the fable of Phaedrus, Demeter stayed in the house of Celeos at Eleusys, Hercules visited Molorchos, and other examples are numerous (Gunkel 1997: 193). Each of these narratives is a "theoxeny", that is, a theophany of divine beings, who came to humans as strangers to observe their behavior (Letellier 1995: 210). Homer said, "And the gods do, in the guise of strangers from afar, put on all manner of shapes, and visit the cities, beholding the violence and the righteousness of men" (*Odyssey*, 17:485–87; cf. Murray and Dimock 1995: 91).

Theoxeni stories in Ugaritic, Biblical, and classical literature

Messages of birth

Some accounts speak of how the gods came down in human form in order to give people good news or warning. There are tales of gods coming to a married couple to provide them with a message or the promise of a child, after the couple has offered gracious hospitality by feeding them. One thinks immediately of Abraham and Sarah feeding three angel messengers with behavior befitting the hospitality guidelines of the Middle East, and then, in return, being promised a child (Gen 18:1–15). In classical sources we find the account of how Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury, three gods, came in disguise to Hyrieus, a childless peasant of Tanagra, and granted him the boon of a son who would become Orion, by placing their semen into the hide of a sacrificed bull, which Hyrieus buried for ten months (*Ovid, Fasti* 5.493–544) (Gaster 1969: 157; Letellier 1995: 213; Bolin 2004: 47–48). Biblical commentators have suggested that there might be a connection between these two accounts, perhaps an older tale from the ancient Near East lies behind both the biblical text and the tale recalled by Ovid.[2]

Scholars have often compared the story of Abraham and Sarah with the Ugaritic account of the visitation by the god Kothar to Danil. They observe the similarities in how the god approached the tent of Danil, how Danil received the deity with hospitality and made special preparations to feed the deity, and finally there was dialogue between Kothar and Danil as Kothar gave the blessing

of the bow to Danil's son, Aqhat.[3] However, there are significant differences between the Ugaritic and the biblical accounts: 1) Danil recognized Kothar as a deity from a distance because of his size, whereas Abraham did not know at first that the messengers were divine. 2) The primary mission of the divine visitors to Abraham was to promise him a son, whereas Danil already had a son. 3) Danil knew already what the mission of Kothar was about, whereas Abraham was taken by surprise by the announcement of a son. 4) Dialogue between the gods who take human form and human beings occurs in ancient Near Eastern literature, but the listener in the narrative knows that it is a deity, as was the case with Danil. In the biblical account, God assumed an apparent clearly normal human form and talked for an extended period of time with Abraham, and only after some discussion did Abraham recognize the divinity of the visitor (Hamori 2008: 83–94, 149–50). The biblical account is a "theoxeny", a story of God or gods disguised as strangers and human, and such "theoxenies" are found not in the ancient Near Eastern texts, but in Greek literature. Esther Hamori believed that Gen 18:1–15 and Gen 32:23–33 are the only examples in the Hebrew Bible of a "human theophany", where God takes human form (Hamori 2008: 1–5 *et passim*). I would respond by observing that Gen 32:23–33 is ambiguous as to whether or not it is really God, and there is very little dialogue. Hence, Gen 18:1–15 is unique in portraying a humanly embodied God speaking clearly to Abraham; it is the only true "theoxeny" in the Hebrew Bible. Ultimately, I think that all four of these differences between the biblical account and the Ugaritic text are extremely significant, especially because the way in which the biblical text differs from the Ugaritic story is the way in which the biblical account closely parallels the Greek story of Hyrieus in Ovid. This is a significant response that I would give to critics who maintain that we should look to the Ugaritic narrative rather than a classical source for a parallel account, or those critics who say casually that such similar stories of gods visiting human beings are a generic narrative form.

Messages of destruction

In some accounts the divine messengers brought an announcement of destruction, and evil people who received the messengers poorly suffered, while those who showed hospitality to the messengers were saved. Thus, when the goddess Demeter came incognito to Argolis, she was received by Athera and Mysios, but turned away by Kolontas, whereupon she decreed that Kolontas should be burned with his house (*Pausanias, Description of Greece*, Book 2.35) (Gaster 1969: 157; Letellier 1995: 227). In a reverse of this legend, the god Jupiter came to Lycaon and was accepted by all the pious peasants, but the king doubted his divine existence, whereupon Jupiter turned the king, his host, into a wolf (*Ovid, Metamorphoses* 1.211–242) (Gunkel 1997: 193). In a legend recounted by Ovid, two gods came to a hospitable old couple, Baucis and Philemon, and they led the old couple to high ground in order for them to survive a flood brought to punish the evil people of that land. The similarity to the biblical account in Gen

19:12–26, wherein the two angels warned Lot and his family to flee Sodom before the destruction of that city, is very striking. Commentators have noted the similarity between these two accounts also.[4]

Hospitality and recognition

There is a common issue that connects the stories of divine messengers who brought news of an impending birth and messengers who saved folk from an impending destruction. In these accounts, the people who received the blessing or salvation were most hospitable to the strangers and were thus rewarded for their hospitality, thus exhibiting examples of appropriate exchange. Their hospitality was repaid with either a child or physical salvation.[5]

Upon considering these accounts more closely it is worth noting the very close similarity between two pairs of accounts. In Genesis 18–19 there is the narrative of Abraham and Sarah, who received the promise of a child from three divine messengers, and the narrative of Lot and his family, who were warned to flee to high ground by two divine messengers. Biblical commentators often focus their attention on the similarity of these two narratives in regard to how Abraham and Lot respectively treat their visitors with the appropriate guideline of hospitality in the ancient world. However, they too often fail to appreciate the contributions that Greek literature might make to this discussion. In the writings of Ovid there is the legend of how three gods came to Hyrieus to promise him a child in *Fasti*, 5.493–535, and the legend of how two gods came to warn Baucis and Philemon to flee to high ground in *Metamorphoses*, 8.625–725. It is interesting that in Genesis 18–19 three divine messengers visited Abraham and Sarah, but only two of those messengers entered Sodom to meet Lot, and no reason is given for the disappearance of the third. Commentators have expressed curiosity about this (Jericke 2003: 159). Some have suggested that a missing narrative could provide the answer if we had it at our avail (Hamori 2008: 74). Could it be that the presence of three and then only two messengers in Genesis 18–19 results from the influence of the two respective Greek legends with their corresponding references to three gods and two gods? I believe this to be the case. Some commentators are concerned with the movement of discourse between Abraham and the divine visitors back and forth between the plural and singular in reference to the visitors (Jericke 2003: 160–195; Hamori 2008: 5). I believe the explanation lies in the usage of a polytheistic Greek account by the biblical author, who then placed it into the context of his monotheistic narrative and theological assumptions, causing God to speak to Abraham while the other two messengers fade into the background.

It is also worth noting that Genesis 18–19 is considered a unified narrative within the patriarchal traditions, and the two closest parallel narratives to the divine visitations of Genesis are found in the two narratives of the writings of Ovid. Although Ovid lived in the late first century BCE and early first century CE, it is possible that the legends he recorded are much older and could have been available to our biblical author. I therefore believe it is worth observing the similarities between these accounts in a much more detailed fashion.

Detailed comparison of Gen 18:1–15 and the story of Hyrieus in *Ovid, Fasti* 5.495–534

Let us first consider the tale of divine beings who brought news of the birth of a child to folk who should not have been able to have children. The biblical narrative is found in Gen 18:1–15. The story of Hyrieus is taken from *Ovid, Fasti* 5.495–534 (Frazer 1931: 296–99). The similarities are as follows:

Three divine visitors are identified

Gen 18:1a: "The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre",

Ovid, Fasti, 5.495–496: "Jupiter, and his brother, who reigns in the deep sea, and Mercury were journeying together".

Host awaits the visitors at a particular time

Gen 18:1b: "… as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.497–498: "It was the time when the yoked kine draw home the upturned plough, and the lamb lies down and drinks the milk of the full ewe".

Host encounters the divine visitors

Gen 18:2: "He looked up and saw the three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.499–500: "An old man Hyrieus, who cultivated a tiny farm, chanced to see them as he stood before his little cottage".

Host receives the visitors graciously

Gen 18:3–4: [3]"He said, 'My Lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. [4]Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree'".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.501–505: "… and thus he spoke: 'Long is the way, but short the hours of daylight left, and my door is open to strangers'. He enforced his words by a look, and again invited them. They accepted the offer and dissembled their divinity. They passed beneath the old man's roof, begrimed with black smoke".

Host offers the visitors food

Gen 18:5: "Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.506–522: In Ovid's version the offer is made evident by the lengthy reference to the preparation by Hyrieus and the foodstuffs mentioned.

Old man and old woman expend effort to feed visitors

Gen 18:6–8: "And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes'. [7]Abraham ran

to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. [8]Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.506–522: "… a little fire was glimmering in the log of yesterday. He knelt and blew up the flames with his breath, and drawing forth the stumps of torches he chopped them up. Two pipkins stood on the fire; the lesser contained beans, the other kitchen herbs; both boiled, each under the pressure of its lid. While he waited, he served out red wine with shaky hand. The god of the sea received the first cup. When he had drained it, 'Now serve the drink', said he, 'to Jupiter in order'. At the word Jupiter the old man paled. When he recovered himself, he sacrificed the ox that ploughed his poor land, and he roasted it in a great fire; and the wine which as a boy he had laid up in his early years, he brought forth stored in its smoky jar. And straightway they reclined on mattresses stuffed with river sedge and covered with linen, but lowly still. The table shone, now with the viands, now with the wine set down on it: the bowl was of red earthenware, the cups were beechen wood".

Reciprocation by the guests

Gen 18:9–10: [9]"They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah'? And he said, 'There, in the tent'. [10]Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son'. And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.523–524: "Quoth Jupiter: 'If thou has any fancy, choose: all will be thine'.

Ovid, Fasti, 5.531–534: "All the gods assented; all took their stand at the bullock's hide—I am ashamed to describe what followed—then they covered the reeking hide by throwing earth on it; when ten months had passed, a boy was born".

Hosts are not able to have children naturally

Gen 18:11: "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.524–530: The calm old man thus spoke:

> I had a dear wife, whose love I won in the flower of early youth. Where is she now? You ask. The urn her ashes holds. To her I swore, and called you gods to witness, Thou shalt be my only spouse. I gave my word, and I keep it. But a different wish is mine: I would be, not a husband, but a father.

Doubt expressed by the hosts

Gen 18:12: "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure'"?

There is no comparable statement of doubt in Ovid's account.

Manifestation of the divinity of the messengers

Gen 18:9–10a, 13–15: [9] "They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent'. [10]Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son'. … [13]The Lord said to Abraham,

> Why did Sarah laugh, and say, Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old? [14]Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.

[15]But Sarah denied, saying, 'I did not laugh'; for she was afraid. He said, 'Oh yes, you did laugh'".

Ovid, Fasti, 5.512–514: "The god of the sea received the first cup. When he had drained it, 'Now serve the drink', said he, 'to Jupiter in order'. At the word Jupiter the old man paled".

In the biblical narrative the divine identity of the messengers became evident when they knew the name of Abraham's wife, which otherwise they should not have known, when they spoke clearly of her impending pregnancy, and when they knew that she laughed, since she did that only in her thoughts ("Sarah laughed to herself", v. 12) (Gunkel 1997: 196–97).

I have listed ten components to the story of Abraham, and the comparable account of Hyrieus parallels nicely nine of these components. The only significant difference is that Hyrieus is a widower while Sarah is still alive for Abraham. However, that theme in the plot is determined by the greater biblical context in which Sarah is a persona in the other chapters, so she could not be omitted. Ultimately, one might assume that the biblical narrative has been crafted with this old Greek folktale in the background.

Comparison of the story of Lot and his wife in Gen 19:1–3, 11–26 and the account of Baucis and Philemon in *Ovid, Metamorphoses*, 8.625–725

Our second set of stories also has a very distinct plotline, wherein angelic messengers warned a married couple of an impending disaster that they must flee, and this warning came after that couple provided the visitors with a meal, while others in the community spurned them. In the biblical text it is the story of Lot and his wife, who were warned to flee the city of Sodom, after the rude Sodomites have been blinded outside their home; in the classical tradition it is the tale of Baucis and Philemon who were warned to flee a flood by the gods Jupiter and Mercury once the old couple recognized the divinity of their visitors by observing how a flagon of wine continued to replenish itself. It is interesting that later biblical references to the story of Sodom (Deut 29:23; Isa 13:19; Jer 50:40; Amos 4:11) do not refer to divine messengers coming to the city. Could our biblical version of the Sodom story have arisen much later than these other biblical references to the tale and have been influenced by Greek sources? (Letellier 1995: 200). A closer look

at these two accounts may reveal even deeper similarities. The story of Lot and his wife is recalled in Gen 19:1–3, 11–26; the account of Baucis and Philemon is recalled in *Ovid, Metamorphoses*, 8.625–725 (Miller 1977: 448–57).

The following comparison will note the great number of similarities between these two accounts. Critics may say that the motifs of the angelic visitors, the destruction of the evil community, the imperative not to look back, and the metamorphosis of a human being as punishment are common folklore motifs, and they will quote many examples in worldwide literature. To that I respond with two observations. Many of the examples cited come from a much later era, and could have been inspired by the biblical narrative itself. Also, the combination of all these particular themes is found only in the stories of Lot and Baucis/Philemon. That inclines me to believe that there is a distinct connection between those two accounts. Herewith are the similarities outlined for the sake of comparison:

Divine visitors arrive

Gen 19:1: "The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.626–627: "Hither came Jupiter in the guise of a mortal, and with his father came Atlas' grandson, he that bears the caduceus, his wings laid aside".

The Genesis story calls the divine messengers angels; Ovid identifies Jupiter as one messenger and hints that the other is Mercury.

Reception is potentially hostile

Gen 19:2b–3: [2b]"They said, 'No; we will spend the night in the square'. [3]But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.627–628: "To a thousand homes they came, seeking a place for rest; a thousand homes were barred against them".

Lot's response indicates that something bad will befall the visitors, if they spend the night in the square, as the later narrative proves to be quite true. Ovid's account states this more directly.

Good hosts take in divine visitors

Gen 19:2: He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.629–633: "Still one house received them, humble indeed, thatched with straw and reeds from the marsh; but pious old Baucis and Philemon, of equal age, were in that cottage wedded in their youth".

Both narratives portray the hosts as very gracious and as the only hospitable people in the community.

Hosts feed the divine guests

Gen 19:3b: "… and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.641–688: (A long description is given of how this poor couple prepares a meager meal for their guests, serving them cabbage and smoked bacon.)

Self-identification of the divine beings by dramatic actions

Gen 19:11: "And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.677–683: "Meanwhile they saw that the mixing-bowl, as often as it was drained, kept filling of its own accord, and that the wine welled up of itself. The two old people saw this strange sight with amaze and fear, and with upturned hands they both uttered a prayer, Baucis and trembling old Philemon".

The self-identification of the divine beings is actually accomplished prior to the narrative about their necessary flight from the city. Commentators have indicated that the action of striking the men outside the door is indeed a most clear identification of their divine status (Letellier 1995: 93, 152–53). However, if we wish to exclude the narrative prior to verse 12 as a separate narrative, then we could view the statement of the divine messengers in verse 13 as a self-revelation of their divine status. I, however, prefer to view that as a separate category of verbal self-identification.

Verbal self-identification of the divine beings

Gen 19:13: "For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.689: "'We are gods', they said".

Ovid's messengers clearly identify themselves; the biblical messengers make it clear by their intended powerful actions of destruction that they are divine beings.

Destruction will come to the community

Gen 19:13a,c: "For we are about to destroy this place, … and the Lord has sent us to destroy it".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.690–691: "… and this wicked neighbourhood shall be punished as it deserves".

Community is evil

Gen 19:13b: "… because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.690–691:b "… and this wicked neighbourhood shall be punished as it deserves".

The hosts will be saved

Gen 19:12: "Then the men said to Lot, 'Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of this place'".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.690–691: "… but to you shall be given exemption from this punishment".

Hosts are told to flee the community

Gen 19:15: "When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city'".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.691–692: "Leave now your dwelling …"

Hosts are told to flee to the hill

Gen 19:17: "When they had brought them outside, they said, 'Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed'".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.692–693: "… and come with us to that all mountain yonder".

Hosts flee into the hills

Gen 19:18–19: [18]"And Lot said to them, 'Oh, no, my lords; [19]your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die'".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.693–696: "They both obeyed and, propped on their staves, they struggled up the long slope".

In Ovid's narrative the old couple fled to the mountains, but in the biblical narrative the motif is reversed, for Lot feared to flee to the mountains and was allowed to flee to the city of Zoar instead. But the theme of flight to the mountains is still in the narrative.

Hosts have a difficult journey into the hills

Gen 19:18–19: [18]"And Lot said to them, 'Oh, no, my lords; [19]your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die'".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.693–696: "They both obeyed and, propped on their staves, they struggled up the long slope".

In Ovid's account the couple is clearly an older couple. The biblical account may imply that Lot is old when he said that disaster would overtake him, presumably because he will be moving slowly (Gunkel 1997: 210).

No divine intervention during the escape

In both accounts the escape is not miraculous; each couple must accomplish the journey with their own difficult efforts. The divine beings encourage them to leave, but they must make the journey on their own volition (Westermann 1985).

Disaster strikes

Gen 19:24–25: [24]"Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; [25]and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.696–699: "… they looked back and saw the whole country-side covered with water, only their own house remaining".

In the biblical text fire is the destructive agent, but in Ovid's narrative it is water. The biblical author used water for Noah's flood, and the promise was given that water would not again destroy the world, so, I guess, fire had to be the agent.

The theme of looking back to see destruction

Gen 19:26: "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.696–699: "… they looked back and saw the whole country-side covered with water, only their own house remaining".

Theme of transformation

Gen 19:26: "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.699–702: "… that old house of theirs, which had been small even for its two occupants, was changed into a temple. Marble columns took the place of the forked wooden supports; the straw grew yellow and became a golden roof; there were gates rich carved, a marble pavement covered the ground".

Theme of human transformation

Gen 19:26: "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.712–719: "And at last, when, spent with extreme old age, they chanced to stand before the sacred edifice talking of old times, Philemon saw Baucis putting forth leaves, Philemon saw Baucis; and as the tree-top formed over their two faces, while still they could they cried with the same words: 'Farewell, dear mate', just as the bark closed over and hid their lips".

Transformed object still observed in later years

Gen 19:26b: "… and she became a pillar of salt".

Ovid, Metamorphoses 8.719–720: "Even to this day the Bithynian peasant in that region points out two trees standing close together, and growing from one double trunk".

One would assume that the pillar of salt transformation would hint at the existence of unusual salt formations near the Dead Sea that Israelites and Jews would have known about. Thus, the biblical story may provide a popular aetiology for a natural phenomenon. Ovid's story clearly describes a natural phenomenon to which people in later years referred.

Hopefully, this comparison dramatically demonstrates the remarkable amount of similarity one can find between these two stories. Although scholars have mentioned these similarities in the past, I believe that this is the most detailed summary of those points of comparison. There are some striking details that one might not notice with a simple and casual observation of the two accounts, such as the motif of fleeing to the hills. I have delineated nineteen points of comparison, which is a significant amount of similarity between these two accounts.

Was biblical narrative inspired by classical traditions?

What then are the implications of such great similarities between these four accounts? I would assume that the Jews would be more interested in reading and studying Greek literary traditions rather than the reverse. I would point to some themes that are uniquely found in the biblical story of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18–19, but nowhere else in the biblical text, such as the warning not to look at something (Sodom destroyed) and the transformation of a person into a natural object (pillar of salt). These themes are found in the classical tradition. We may recall the danger of looking at Medusa's head, the command to Orpheus not to look back into Hades when he took Eurydice out of the underworld, or the transformation of people into animals (Lucius became a donkey until Isis converted him back to human form according to *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius) (Letellier 1995: 230).

If the biblical author was familiar with these Greek myths, when would the biblical author have come into contact with them? Ovid lived from 43 BCE to 18 CE, but he drew upon older traditions. If the biblical author was familiar with an old version of those classical traditions, most likely such familiarity arose only after the post-exilic era, perhaps even as late as the Hellenistic era after 300 BCE.

In the past generation, a number of biblical scholars have suggested a post-exilic date, even a Hellenistic date for the Pentateuch.[6] Other scholars who date the Pentateuch in the Persian period around 400–350 BCE suggest Greek historiographical influence upon the literature, especially from Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE).[7] One could also suggest that perhaps the Lot-Abraham tradition in Genesis 18–19 might be a late insertion into the patriarchal narratives.[8] Jean Louis Ska, in particular, observed how Genesis 18–19 appears to be dependent upon Genesis 17 and hence post-priestly in origin (Ska 1987: 383–89; 1995: 412–13). Ludwig Schmidt dated Genesis 18–19 between 500 and 350 BCE due to the dialogue over the destruction of Sodom and comparable reflection on the loss of Jerusalem,

especially in the sensitive and reflective debate between God and Abraham (Schmidt 1976: 159–164). Detlef Jericke dated these chapters between 515 and 450 BCE for similar reasoning (Jericke 2003: 233–34). Thus, such a tale, as recorded later by Ovid, could have inspired the biblical author, if the stories of Hyrieus and Philemon/Baucis go back as far as the fifth century BCE.

This study, I believe, implies that the biblical narrative was partially inspired by the Greek tradition. Elsewhere I have argued that the narrative in Genesis 19 is also dependent upon Judges 19, which again implies the lateness of the narrative of Lot and his family in Sodom (2015b: 121–29). This study might be seen as supporting an argument for the creation of this narrative in the Hellenistic era, or at least in the late Persian period, as some scholars have suggested over the past generation.

The message of the texts in Genesis 18–19 about the promise of a child to Abraham and Lot's flight from Sodom, as well as the stories of Hyrieus and Baucis/Philemon in Ovid's writings, may be summarized best in Heb 13:2, "Remember to be hospitable. By so doing some have entertained angels unawares". And in so doing, some, in particular, may have saved their lives. These accounts are a message to any people to treat strangers with kindness, a truly meaningful message also today.

Notes

1 This essay was originally published as "Divine Messengers in Genesis 18–19 and Ovid." *SJOT* 31 (2017): 66–79.
2 Gunkel (1997: 199), who called them the same stories; John Skinner (1930: 302–03); Gerhard von Rad (1972: 205); cf. Dorothy Irvin (1978: 17–24), who analyzed motifs found in Genesis 18–19 with legends and myths from the ancient Near East. Letellier (1995: 214); Philippe Wajdenbaum (2011: 115–16).
3 Wolfram Herrmann, (1960: 208–09); Paolo Xella (1978: 484); Yitzhak Avishur (1986–87: 168–77); Esther Hamori (2008, 83–94), who summarized Avishur's article.
4 Talia Rudin-Obrasky (1982: 105), quoted in Yitzhak Peleg (2012: 130–31); Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar (1998: 481–82); Robert Letellier (1995: 200); Thomas Bolin (2004: 47–48); Philippe Wajdenbaum (2011: 117–18).
5 Bolin (2004: 37–56); cf. Peleg (2012: 129–56); and Jonathan Safren (2013: 157–78), both of whom compare Abraham and Lot in regard to their *quid pro quo* hospitality to strangers.
6 Niels Peter Lemche (1993: 163–93; 2001: 200–24); Bolin (1996); Thomas Thompson (1999a, 1999b); Philippe Guillaume (2004).
7 Flemming Nielsen (1997) and Jan-Wim Wesselius (1999; 2002), who marshalled many parallels between Herodotus and the Primary History; cf. Gnuse (2010); John Van Seters (1983: 8–54), who called for a comparison between Herodotus and other Greek historiographers with the Deuteronomistic History.
8 Cf. Bruce Vawter (1977: 239), who believes the persona of Lot here is different from the portrayal of Lot in the earlier texts of Genesis.

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6 Greek connections

Genesis 1–11 and the poetry of Hesiod[1]

A consideration of the biblical narratives in Genesis 1–11 that are attributed to the Yahwist Historian and Priestly Editors in comparison with the epics of the Greek poet Hesiod can provide interesting and valuable insights. The biblical text and Hesiod both spoke of primordial events. Hesiod devoted most of his poetry to describing the origin of the cosmos, the gods, and the heroes of ancient times prior to the Trojan War, which for him was the beginning of his own age. The Primeval History in Genesis 1–11 is the prelude to recalling the tales of the patriarchs in Genesis 12–26, 38, and the story of Israel's birth in the exodus experience recounted in the book of Exodus. Thus, both literatures were meant to be preludes to the story of the Greek and Israelite peoples respectively. My suspicion is that the biblical author may have been familiar with Hesiod's writings. In the past, biblical scholars have looked to Mesopotamian narratives to elucidate biblical stories, and the materials in Genesis 1–11 especially. I, too, have engaged in this approach to the biblical text (Gnuse 2014). But I believe it is time to look to the west, to the Greek traditions, to gain further insight into the materials that might have been available to our biblical authors.

Only in the past generation have some biblical scholars begun to pursue an analysis of biblical texts in the Primary History (Genesis through 2 Kings) and Greek texts. Such considerations were not undertaken when early dates were given for the biblical literature. But with the increasing tendency over the past thirty years to lower the dates for the origin of biblical texts, it has become feasible, even advisible to look for connections between Greek texts and biblical narratives.

For many years, critical scholars located the Yahwist traditions of the Pentateuch in the era of the United Monarchy, specifically in the court of Solomon, and they spoke of the Yahwist as a bard who crafted an epic oral narrative. The Yahwist Narrative constitutes most of the text in Genesis 1–11, and includes Gen 2:4b–25; 3:1–24; 4:1–25; 6:1–8; 7:1–5, 17–24; 8:6–12, 20–22; 9:18–29; 10:8–19, 21, 24–30; 11:1–9, 27–32. Priestly narratives are believed to include Gen 1:1–2:4a; 5:1–32; 6:11–22; 7:6–16; 8:1–5, 13–19; 9:1–17; 10:1–7, 20, 22–23, 31–32; 11:10–26. However, the past generation of scholars has increasingly suggested an exilic or post-exilic date for this material, calling the Yahwist a historian rather than a bard. John Van Seters in several works has defended this position (Van

Seters 1975; 1992; 1994). I have contributed an article defending the same notion by suggesting that the Yahwist account of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9 is a parody on the uncompleted ziggurat building efforts of Nabonidus who fell from power around 540 BCE (Gnuse 2010b: 229–44). Thus, like Van Seters and others, I date the Yahwist to 500 BCE or later. If we date the Yahwist to 500 BCE or later, and the Priestly materials in Genesis 1–11 are already dated by us to that same era, then comparison with the Greek literary tradition becomes feasible.

Persian or Hellenistic origins?

Scholars who date the origin of the biblical literature later fall more or less into two camps. One group suggests that most of the biblical narratives in Genesis through 2 Kings arose in the Persian period, and they would date the emergence of the texts between 500 and 330 BCE. They would find value in pursuing the comparison of biblical texts with Homer, Hesiod, Hecataeus of Miletus, and Herodotus especially, since those Greek texts emerged before 400 BCE and thus could have been available for the scribes who created our biblical texts. The other group of scholars suggest that most of the biblical narratives arose in the Hellenistic period, perhaps between 300 and 250 BCE. They suggest that the Hebrew text arose only a short time before the Greek Septuagint was translated from it. They would further suggest that the vast majority of the biblical narratives in Genesis through 2 Kings are theological fiction. They would consider a much wider range of Greek literature in their evaluation of the sources for the biblical authors.

Significant contributions have been made by authors who work with the assumption of Persian period origins. Studies have compared the writings of Herodotus with the Primary History, Genesis through 2 Kings, often analyzing particular biblical texts.[2] Other scholars, who project the origin of the Primary History into the Hellenistic period, after 300 BCE, frequently suggest that scribes in Alexandria were responsible for the bulk of the biblical narratives and the Septuagintal translation. Sometimes they speak in general terms about the entire biblical corpus, at times they analyze specific texts.[3] For example, Russell Gmirken has analyzed numerous texts in Genesis and Exodus as dependent upon third century BCE Greek historians Berossus of Babylon and Manetho of Egypt respectively (Gmirkin 2006: 89–239). In particular reference to the Primeval History, Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano has explored the possibility that motifs in the Primeval History of Genesis 1–11 echo the writings of Plato, especially his works *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Symposium* (Niesiolowski-Spano 2007: 106–26). I have written articles to suggest that portions of the Primary History come from the Hellenistic period (Gnuse 1998; 2007; 2017). Of special interest to me is Daniel Hawk's suggestion that 1 Samuel 8–2 Kings 8 was influenced by the play *Orestia*, written by Aeschylus (Hawk 2003), for I have an article under submission (an earlier version of Chapter 10 in the present volume) proposing that the story of Jephthah's daughter in Judg 11:34–40 was influenced by two plays of Euripides about the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

Van Seters, very early in the scholarly discussion, suggested that the Yahwist would have been aware of the western literary tradition, especially the Greek poets and historians, such as Hesiod, Herodotus, and Hecataeus of Miletus (Van Seters 1983; 1992: 78–103). Van Seters has been criticized by several scholars for saying this. One such scholar, Richard Hess, has criticized Van Seters for trying to connect the biblical text with the Greek tradition, although ironically Hess then provided a number of similarities between Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* and Genesis 10 (Hess 1994: 69–71). I suspect that the similarities merit further discussion. In this essay, I wish to elaborate on Van Seter's observations, as well as draw on works of other scholars to discern the parallels between the writings of Hesiod and Genesis 1–11.

I believe that the Primeval History was primarily created in critical response to Mesopotamian accounts with their concomitant religious and political ideologies, an idea that I referred to frequently in my theological commentary on Genesis 1–11 (Gnuse 2014). But I also believe that the Yahwist and Priestly authors of Genesis 1–11 were familiar with Greek historiographical work. A totally different proposal has been put forward by Mandell and Freedman, who suggest that perhaps Herodotus visited Jerusalem on his way to Egypt in the fifth century BCE and thus became familiar with the Primary History of Genesis through 2 Kings (Mandell and Friedman 1993: 175–76). I seriously doubt that the flow of information and inspiration for historical narratives would have been from Jewish to Greek intelligentsia, especially when all things Greek were permeating the Near East in this period and giving inspiration to people. To that end I devote this essay. I wish to defend Van Seters' suggestions against the criticisms of his detractors by probing a possible point of contact between the western literary tradition of Greece and the biblical text.

Connections with Hesiod

Scholars have called for a more thorough evaluation of the connections between biblical texts and Hesiod's writings (Fuller 1995: 617; Darshan 2013: 518). Significant scholarship has proceeded in this direction for the past generation. Philippe Guillaume suggested that the biblical editor who placed the book of Judges into its present context was inspired by Hesiod's *Works and Days*, for in that work Hesiod locates an age of heroes prior to the historical age, namely those of the Trojan War, and this performs the same function as the book of Judges with its heroes that precede the rise of the monarchy (Wajdenbaum 2011: 146–64). Bruce Louden discussed the possible inspiration of material in the New Testament Book of Revelation by Hesiod's *Theogony*, for in Revelation dragons appear to challenge God and persecute believers, and this is comparable to the battles in the *Theogony*, such as Zeus defeating the Titans and the dragon Typhoeus (*Theogony* 687–880) (Louden 2014). John Poirier believes that Hesiod's definition of a generation, recalled by Plutarch, as being 108 years in duration, may correspond to the statement in Gen 15:13–16 that the four hundred years of slavery in Egypt was only four generations in length (Poirier 2003).

As we approach the use of Hesiod in our comparison with the biblical text, we also recognize that critical classical scholars assume that there is not one historical Hesiod behind all the Hesiodic literature, but rather we are confronting a Hesiodic school of great authors who worked their craft over a number of years (Lamberton 1988). Some prefer to speak of a school of "Boiotian" epic rather than to say Hesiodic to distinguish the literature from the Homeric school of poetry (Lattimore 1959: 2–3). The classic works of Hesiod worthy of our consideration include *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and *Catalogue of Women* (which is extremely fragmentary, but may be the most worthwhile piece of literature for comparison). The first two works are generally attributed with certainty to Hesiod, and they are his only complete works (Frazer 1983: 3; Nelson 1998: 31–32). Scholars compare Hesiod with Homer by saying that the literature from the Hesiodic tradition is more interested in "catalogue" and "genealogy" while the Homeric tradition favors epic narrative (Lattimore 1959: 3).

Hesiod may have lived in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE. He was the son of a man who had failed as a merchant and had become a small farmer in Ascra in central Greece (*Works and Days* 633–40). Hesiod had been cheated by his brother, Perses, in matters of inheritance because Perses had bribed "kings" or "barons" to decide against Hesiod (*Works and Days* 27–39). Hesiod won a contest with his poetry at Euboia performed for the funeral competition honoring Amphidames (*Works and Days* 651–659), perhaps with his poem *Theogony* (Lattimore 1959: 3, 12; Athanassakis 1983: 1; Frazer 1983: 36; Nelson 1998: 33). Hesiod may have lived at the time when writing began to emerge, so that his works might have emerged initially as written texts in the seventh century BCE (Athanassakis 1983: 2; Nelson 1998: 41). If so, then written texts might have been available for the scribes who created our biblical text after 500 BCE.

Theogony recounts the origin of the gods and the cosmos, and might best be compared to the Priestly creation account in Genesis 1. In Theogony, Hesiod attempted to organize and tell in orderly fashion the old myths and legends of his age in the early seventh century BCE (Brown 1953: 35; Kirk 1962: 63–64). He has apparently drawn upon Homeric traditions, the local legends of his own age, and perhaps ancient Near Eastern narratives (Brown 1953: 36). His ideational message was that the earth should be seen as the result of growth and change both in the divine and human realms (Brown 1953: 15; Frazer 1983: 1–9; Athanassakis 1983: 10; Lombardo and Lamberton 1993: 15). He has been described as a true theologian in contrast to Homer for his attempts to catalogue the gods and describe their relationships (Lattimore 1959: 7). Critical scholars recognize that major expansion and omission occurred from the seventh through the fifth centuries BCE (Solmsen 1949: 3; Brown 1953: 7; Kirk 1962: 63). If the Yahwist and Priestly Editors knew this epic, most likely in the fifth century BCE, then most of those additions were already in the narrative.

Works and Days is a moral diatribe by Hesiod against his brother Perses because of his dishonesty in the family inheritance. In this work Hesiod utters gnomic sayings that lead scholars to compare the work with the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East and Israel (West 1978: 1–25; Tandy and Neale 1996: 5–9;

Edwards 2004: 25). He may have been influenced significantly by wisdom texts from the ancient Near East according to some (Frazer 1983: 10–11; Lombardo and Lamberton 1993: 9–10). Additionally, the work provides directions for farming in the early seventh century BCE Greek world, and provides insight into the life and practices of Greek farmers (Athanassakis 1983: 64; Tandy and Neale 1996: 5–9; Edwards 2004). Some have used this work to extensively reconstruct the socio-economic structures of Greece in that age (Edwards 2004). Hesiod and Virgil are the only classical poets who tell us about the experience of farming (Nelson 1998: 39).

The very fragmentary *Catalogue of Women* tells the genealogies of gods and humans up to the Trojan War. It has been dated to the sixth century BCE, thus not from the historical Hesiod, and it has even been located more precisely by some scholars to the years 540–520 BCE on the basis of particular references in the text (West 1985: 130, 136). Hence, it appears almost contemporary with the date I assume for the Yahwist.

I have observed a number of continuities between these three narratives in Hesiod and the biblical text in the Primeval History.

Human decline throughout the ages

Both Hesiod and the Primeval History testify to a decline in the quality of human life in the primordial age.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* 109–201 describes the five ages of men that have existed upon the earth: age of gold, age of silver, age of bronze, age of heroes, and the present age of iron. There is a clear degeneration of the human race in those ages. In the golden age people lived on Olympus when Cronus was king, and they were free from care and old age, lacking evil. The fields bore crops of their own accord, and they shared their goods with all. When their age passed, they became the good spirits in the world today. In the silver age people remained children for a century and then died a painful death shortly thereafter due to their wicked behavior toward each other. Because they would not honor the immortals or sacrifice to the gods, Zeus covered them up in the earth. In the bronze age people were made out of ash trees, and they were terrible and strong and so committed acts of violence. They had massive limbs and hands growing out of their shoulders. They did not eat bread; presumably they ate meat. With their weapons of bronze they killed each other and went down to chilly Hades. Zeus created a fourth race, just and superior, the heroes of old, some of whom fought at Troy. Zeus finally settled these heroes at the ends of the earth where they dwell free of care on the Isles of the Blessed eating from grain giving fields and honey sweet fruit trees. The current age is the age of iron wherein people experience daily toil and distress, and the gods give them grievous cares. Zeus will destroy each person when he or she grows old. There is strife between families, disrespect for the aged, bad people prevail over good, envy and gloating prevail among all, and life is baleful. The age of heroes appears to have been inserted by Hesiod into an earlier four age format (West 1978: 174; Lombardo

and Lamberton 1993: 54). The age of heroes clearly disrupts his narrative format of the four ages associated with four metals. Hesiod may have inserted the age of heroes into the four ages between his bronze age and his iron age because he needed it as his reference to the Trojan War, which had to be mentioned for his audience, and because his iron age was for him the contemporary age in which he lived (Athanassakis 1983: 92–93). Remove this age of heroes and clearly there is a degeneration of the human race. West has provided a succinct but thorough study of the concept of the four or five ages in other contemporary cultures, and he believes that Hesiod obtained the four ages from Mesopotamian texts lost to us (West 1978: 173–74).

In Genesis 1–11 there is likewise a slow descent comparable to Hesiod's view (West 1995: 37–38). The world is created and everything is said to be good (Genesis 1). The man and woman begin life in the garden, but are exiled (Genesis 2–3); Cain then kills Abel and places a greater curse upon the ground (Gen 4:1–16); gods have sex with human women to produce evil giants (Gen 6:1–4); a flood destroys almost all of humanity (Gen 6:5–9:17); Ham dishonors his father (with a word play implying the possibility of rape) (Gen 9:20–27); and the Tower of Babel shows humanity defying God (Gen 11:1–9). The ages of human beings also shorten throughout this era. In the Priestly text of Gen 5:1–32 ages for the early ancestors are long: Adam (930), Seth (912), Enosh (905), Kenan (910), Mahalalel (895), Jared (962), Enoch (365), Methuselah (969), and Noah (950). In Gen 11:10–32 ages for the later ancestors are shorter: Shem (600), Arpachshad (438), Shelah (433), Eber (464), Peleg (239), Reu (239), Serug (230), Nahor (148), and Terah (205). Add to this the interesting statement by God in the Yahwistic text of Gen 6:3 where God says that people from that point onward would not live for more than one hundred and twenty years because of their sinfulness. However, the folk in Gen 11:10–32 seem to have been exempted (perhaps because this is a Priestly text and Gen 6:3 is Yahwistic).

There is a difference between Hesiod's narrative and the biblical account worth mentioning. Hesiod portrays the decline as a natural devolution of human existence, but the biblical author attributes this decline to human sin. The biblical narrative is replete with examples of human sin and divine forgiveness, but the impression one receives is that human sin is responsible for the general shortening of human life, especially in light of the programmatic statement in Gen 6:3. Hesiod does not believe that Zeus or the gods punish humanity for their sins; rather, human degeneration occurs naturally (Nelson 1998: 71).

Increasing distance of God

In similar fashion Hesiod's literature and the Yahwistic Primeval History imply that during the primordial age God or the gods became increasingly distant from humanity.

Hesiod scholars view the *Catalogue of Women* as portraying the gods increasingly distant from human affairs over the years. The *Catalogue of Women* may conclude with allusions to the Trojan War or the Heroic Age after which comes

the modern age. *Works and Days* has the Heroic Age come before the banality and evil of the Iron Age, or the modern era. In both works one gets the impression that the gods have become distant by the contemporary era (Clay 2005: 28–29). Due to the fragmented nature of the *Catalogue of Women*, distancing of the gods is a subjective perception, in my opinion, but it appears to be more evident in *Works and Days*.

In the biblical tradition, likewise, one could envision the story line as increasingly distancing God from humanity. In the garden (Genesis 2–3), God comes and walks with the man and woman. In the story of Cain and Abel and the story of Noah, God speaks with Cain and Noah, and during the flood God takes special care of Noah and his family (Genesis 4–9). But God is much more distant in the sin of Ham and the Tower of Babel accounts (Gen 9:20–27; 11:1–9). One can sense a progression here also.

Again, there is a theological difference to be observed. In the Yahwistic Primeval History, God may indeed become distant for humanity, but this is designed to contrast with the Patriarchal accounts in Genesis 12–36, 38, where God again becomes present for the patriarchal ancestors. It would appear that the biblical author may be trying to create an image wherein God becomes increasingly distant from humanity as a whole, and then becomes very present again for the patriarchal ancestors and the people of Israel, as a specific people out of all the nations in the world. In Hesiod the gods simply become distant because that is the nature of human existence.

Origin of the world

Both Hesiod and Genesis 1 describe the origin of the cosmos in similar terms. They both speak of an original "void" or "chaos", the creation of light and darkness, and the creation of the sky above and the earth with the ocean below.

Critical classical scholars are quick to point out that Hesiod may have been familiar with ancient Near Eastern accounts of creation, and the same is surely true for the biblical account in Genesis 1 with its striking similarity to the *Enuma Elish*.[4] Thus, it is subjective to say that the biblical author may have been using Hesiod's *Theogony*, when both Hesiod and the biblical author may have been familiar with Mesopotamian accounts. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare Hesiod's *Theogony* with Genesis 1.

The relevant passages in Hesiod are in *Theogony* 116–31:

> (116) "In truth, first of all Chasm (Chaos) came to be, and then the broad-breasted Earth, the ever immovable seat of all the immortals who possess snowy Olympus' peak and murky Tartarus in the depths of the broad-pathed earth, and Eros, who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the limb-melter—he overpowers the mind and the thoughtful counsel of all the gods and of all human beings in their breasts. (123) From Chasm (Chaos), Erebos and black Night came to be; and the Aether and Day came forth from Night, who conceived and bore them after mingling in love with Erebos.

> (126) Earth first of all bore starry Sky, equal to herself, to cover her on every side, so that she would be the ever immovable seat for the blessed gods; and she bore the high mountains, the graceful haunts of the goddesses, Nymphs who dwell on the wooded mountains; and she also bore the barren sea seething with its swell, Pontus."
>
> (trans. in Most 2006: 12–13).

Both works begin with a reference to the "void".

Theogony 116 says that Chaos was born first and after her came Gaia or earth. Gen 1:2 states, "the earth was a formless void". Literally, the biblical text reads that the earth was "without form" and "void". Both of those biblical words may be a subtle allusion to the Mesopotamian goddess of chaos in the *Enuma Elish*, Tiamat. Hesiod's reference to "chaos" may also reflect an awareness of this same goddess of chaos. But it is possible that the biblical author also knew Hesiod's text in addition to the Mesopotamian texts, for the biblical text and Hesiod both expressly say "chaos" while the *Enuma Elish* is not so explicit in describing Tiamat as such (Foster 2003: 391–99, provides the appropriate text of *Enuma Elish*).

Night and day are mentioned next in Hesiod's *Theogony* 123–25. Chaos gives birth to *erebos* (darkness) and *black Night*, *erebos* impregnated *black Night* to produce "Aether" and "Day". Likewise, on the first day of creation God separated the light and the darkness (Gen 1:4–5). Interestingly, the Mesopotamian *Enuma Elish* (Foster 2003: 398–400) does not really have such a reference to the creation of light and darkness, so at this point we might suspect that the biblical author may be referring more directly to Hesiod's *Theogony*. This is a significant observation.

Next in Hesiod's *Theogony 126–31*, a longer section describes the generation of the "starry Sky" (line 126), the "high mountains" (line 129), and "the barren sea seething with its swell, Pontus" (line 131). On the second day in Gen 1:6–8, God created the firmament with the waters above it and the land below with the waters under the land. Herein we observe the creation of the heavens, mountains, and sea of Hesiod's account. The accounts in *Theogony* and Genesis 1 are much closer to each other than either one is to the Mesopotamian accounts when we consider all three texts.

From this point onward, the biblical account and Hesiod's narrative diverge. Hesiod continues to speak about the generation of various gods, while the biblical text describes the creation of plant life, the sun, the moon, stars, birds, fish, land animals, and finally, man and woman. However, one is struck by the similarities between Hesiod and the biblical description of original chaos and the first two days. Indeed, it appears that "the authors of Genesis had made room for Hesiod's *Theogony*" (Thompson and Wajdenbaum 2014: 15).

If the biblical author was familiar with Hesiod's narrative, one can sense the distinct difference in the biblical author's perspective. Hesiod's account is all about cosmogony and the emergence of the gods. The biblical account, by comparison to the Greek text, is very much concerned with the structure of the world

that humanity shall live in, and it culminates in the creation of people who are in the "image" and "likeness" of God. Hesiod's *Theogony* contains no account of the creation of people. Ironically, we are led to conclude that in comparison to the Greek text, the biblical text is more anthropocentric. God then becomes a deity far more gracious with a deep concern for the human creature and the creation of the world that humanity shall live in and rule. In the past we have compared Genesis 1 with Genesis 2, declaring the former chapter to be cosmological in perspective and the latter chapter to be more anthropocentric. After viewing the comparable passages in Hesiod, we may be forced to alter our generalizations about Genesis 1.

Women and the "fall"

In both traditions women are involved in the "fall" of humanity, but women cannot be found in comparable Mesopotamian accounts. That is significant.

According to Hesiod, Zeus brings evil upon men by the creation of women. Zeus does this in response to the theft of fire from the divine realm by Prometheus. Originally people were all male, but Zeus had Hephaestus craft a woman. Hesiod presents two versions of how Pandora brought evil upon human (*Works and Days* 42–105; *Theogony* 570–612; cf. Van Seters 1983: 23; 1992: 80).

Works and Days, 77–82, 90–96:

> "Then into her breast the intermediary, the killer of Argus, set lies and guileful words and a thievish character, by the plans of deep-thundering Zeus; and the messenger of the gods placed a voice in her and named this woman Pandra (All-Gift), since all those who have their mansions on Olympus had given her a gift—a woe for men who live on bread. … For previously the tribes of men used to live upon the earth entirely apart from evils, and without grievous toil and distressful diseases, which give death to men. For in misery mortals grow old at once. But the woman removed the great lid from the storage jar with her hands and scattered all its contents abroad—she wrought baneful evils for human beings."
>
> (trans. from Most 2006: 92–95).

Theogony 585–595:

> "Then, when he had contrived this beautiful evil thing in exchange for that good one, he led her out to where the other gods and the human beings were, while she exulted in the adornment of the mighty father's bright-eyed daughter, and wonder gripped the immortal gods and the mortal human beings when they saw the steep deception, intractable for human beings. For from her comes the race of female women: for of her is the deadly race and tribe of women a great woe for mortals, dwelling with men, no companions of baneful poverty but only of luxury."
>
> (trans. from Most 2006: 50–51).

Classical scholars point out that the portrayal of Pandora in *Works and Days* is more negative than the portrayal in the *Theogony* (Pucci 1977: 82). Pandora's creation is not only unnecessary in the order of the cosmos, but she is the corollary to the good gifts of Zeus, she brings evil into the world, producing asymmetry that will endure throughout human existence (Pucci 1977: 86). Classical scholars also assume that the negative portrayal of women reflects Hesiod's own personal views more so than the Greek culture of that age (Solmsen 1949: 48). Although Hesiod has a story about how woman was created, he lacks an account about the origin of man. It has been suggested that perhaps he knew of ancient Near Eastern traditions of how humanity was created from clay and the blood of an evil god, and he felt that it was not a noble description of human origins, so he omitted discussion of male origins altogether (Athanassakis 1983: 9–10).

There is a significant difference between Hesiod and the biblical tradition. In Genesis 2–3 the woman is portrayed in a much more positive fashion, for she is created "good" and meant to be a "helper" for the man. The word for helper does not mean subordinate, but rather means a strong helper or savior, and the word is often used to describe God (Gen 2:18, 20). Furthermore, in the fall narrative the man and woman are both held responsible for the sin of rebellion, for they both eat of the fruit together, the man is "with her" (Gen 3:6) as she takes the fruit. Their eyes are opened at the same time (Gen 3:7), implying that they ate almost simultaneously. When confronted by God, the man even tries to blame God by saying to God that the woman YOU made, she gave the fruit to me (Gen 3:12). The woman is not as crass in her response (Gen 3:13). They both hear the pronouncements of God for their action in eating the fruit and attempting to pass the blame to each other and ultimately to God. In the divine pronouncements God actually says as much to the man (Gen 3:17–19) as to the snake and the woman combined (Gen 3:14–16) (Gnuse 2014: 98–130). The portrayal of woman in the Yahwist narrative is decidedly more positive than what we read in Hesiod, for she is not the solitary person responsible for bringing sin into the world. It seems that the biblical text may place more blame with the man for failing to prevent his wife from taking the fruit (Gnuse 2014: 41).

In the Priestly narrative of Genesis 1, the man and woman are created together and both are given a rather significant status in God's world. In Gen 1:27 we are told that God made "man" and made them into both male and female. Both male and female are said to be in the "image" and "likeness" of God, and both are given the commission to "rule" and "subdue" the world (Gen 1:26–28). All of the vocabulary is royal imagery, so both the man and the woman are portrayed as kings and queens in God's world (Gnuse 2014: 34–41). This is a high view of people, and this is a particularly high view of women. This portrayal contrasts vividly with Hesiod's narratives.

Perhaps the biblical authors were aware of Hesiod's account and reacted against it. There is no account in Mesopotamia that involves a woman. That the only other story with a woman involved in the so called "fall" is found in Greek literature should make us suspicious. That the portrayal of the woman is so dramatically different in the biblical account should make us suspicious. I cannot

absolutely prove it, but I suspect that the biblical author knew the Greek account and consciously reacted against it.

Sexual unions of gods and humans

In both Hesiod and the Bible there are narratives that describe how the gods have sex with humans to produce powerful beings, but such accounts are rare in Mesopotamia, other than the generic claim of kings to divine origins.

In the *Catalogue of Women* by Hesiod there are numerous accounts of how gods impregnated women to produce powerful beings and great heroes in the primeval age. Though the text is fragmented so that many of the names are lost, the following are representative examples of such sexual unions: Pandora and Zeus gave birth to Graecus (Most 2007: 44–45), Thyia and Zeus gave birth to Magnes and Macedon (Most 2007: 48–49), Canace and Poseidon bore Aeolus (Most 2007: 60–61), Molione and Poseidon bore Cteatus and Eurytus (Most 2007: 62–63), Iphimedea and Poseidon sired the sons that were otherwise attributed to Aloesus (Most 2007: 64–65), Althaea and Ares sired Melander (Most 2007: 74–75), Tyro and Poseidon gave birth to Neleus and Pelias (Most 2007: 86–87, 100–01), Philonis and Apollo birthed Philammon (Most 2007: 128–31), Mestra and Poseidon bore Eurypylus (Most 2007: 140–41), Eurynome and Poseidon bore Bellerphon (Most 2007: 142–43), Peiren and Zeus birthed Io (Most 2007: 144–45), Europa and Zeus birthed Minos, Sarpedon, and Bacchylides (Most 2007: 158–61), Calypso and Hermes sired the Cephallenians (Most 2007: 172–73), Pleione and Atlas sired Taygete, Electra, Alcyone, Asterope, Celeno, Maia, and Merope (Most 2007: 186–88), Electra and Zeus gave birth to Eetion and Dardanus (Most 2007: 188–89), Aethusa and Apollo birthed Eleuther (Most 2007: 190–91), Antiope and Zeus gave birth to Amphion and Zethus (Most 2007: 192–93), Alcmene and Zeus gave birth to Heracles (Most 2007: 206–07), Aegina and Zeus sired Aeacus (Most 2007: 212–13), Euboea and Apollo sired Argeius (Most 2007: 240–41), Arsinoe and Apollo bore Asclepius (Most 2007: 240–41), and Cyrene and Apollo bore Aristaeus (Most 2007: 242–43). Hesiod describes the women in these sexual unions lyrically by saying, "and they loosened their girdles and because of golden Aphrodite mingling with gods" (Most 2007: 41).

In Hesiod's *Theogony* 963–1022, there is attention to the sexual unions of the gods and humans. Hesiod has a virtual roll call of heroes produced by the union of a goddess and a human male in *Theogony* 963–991, 1003–1018. The following is a list of goddesses, their human consorts, and the offspring: Demeter and Iasius sired Plutus; Harmonia and Cadmus sired Ino, Semele, Agaue, and Autonoe; Callirhoe and Chrysaor birthed Geryoneus; Eos and Tithonus birthed Memnon; Eos and Cephalus sired Phaethon; Psamathe and Aeacos sired Phocus; Thetis and Peleus birthed Achilles; Cytherea and Anchises birthed Aeneas; Circe and Odysseus sired Agrius, Latinus, and Telegomus; and Calypso and Odysseus sired Nausithous (Most 2006: 81–85).

Gen 6:1–4 simply states that the "sons of the gods/God" saw that the "daughters of men" were fair and had sex with them. The offspring of these sexual

unions were perceived negatively by the biblical author, and the ensuing narrative about the flood may imply that these semi-divine offspring and perhaps even the "sons of the gods" were so evil that they had to be destroyed by the flood in addition to all humanity. This may be the biblical author's response not only to Mesopotamian propaganda about their divine kings but also a critique of Greek semi-divine beings (Van Seters 1992: 156–57; Gnuse 2014: 195).

Humanity descended from a flood hero

In Hesiod and the Bible (Genesis 10), all contemporary people are descended from the hero who survived the flood, but in Mesopotamia people are recreated anew after the flood while the flood hero goes off to a special land with the gift of immortality.

In the biblical tradition Noah sires Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and in the Greek traditions Hesiod and Hecataeus of Miletus have a tradition of Deucalion and his three sons surviving the flood (Van Seters 1988: 13; Gnuse 2014: 191). According to Hesiod in *Catalogue of Women*, Deucalion, the flood survivor, who is the son of Prometheus and the grandson of Iapetus (a Titan), is the ancestor of the Greek peoples. He is the father of Hellen, who, in turn, is the father of Dorus, Aeolus, and Xuthus, the ancestors of the major Greek tribes (Most 2007: 44–47, 52–53; Darshan 2013: 521).

Xuthus is the father of Achaeus and Ion, the fathers of the Achaeans and Ionians, Dorus sired the Dorians, and Aeolus sired the Aeolians. Thus, these three give rise to all the Greek peoples, like the sons of Noah give rise to all peoples. Ion may be equivalent to the biblical Yavan, the son of Japhet (Wajdenbaum 2011: 109; Darshan 2013: 522). Deucalion and Pyrrha had other daughters, and they gave rise to the Magnesians and Macedonians, folk north of Greece. It has been suggested that this genealogical table reflects the political reality of Greece in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE (West 1985: 125–71; Hall 1977: 43–110; Darshan 2013: 522). I have suggested that the table of nations can be dated to the middle of the sixth century BCE, so that these traditions arise in the same era both in Greece and the biblical world (Gnuse 2014: 240–47).

Hecataeus of Miletus has a genealogy similar to that found in the *Catalogue of Women*. According to Hecataeus, the sons of Deucalion were Pronoos, Orestheus, and Marathonius, and Hellen was the son of Pronoos, thus Hecataeus adds an extra generation. But like Hesiod, Hecateus attributes three sons to the flood hero (Darshan 2013: 523). Other Greek logographers also attribute the emergence of peoples in Greece to the flood hero, so generally the narrative of Genesis 10 and Greek traditions agree over Mesopotamian traditions that turn the flood hero into an immortal being with no descendants (Darshan 2013: 523–25). Guy Darshan concludes that if this tradition of the flood hero as the human ancestor of all people is found in Greek and biblical sources, but not in Mesopotamian sources, its origin must be on the periphery of the ancient Near East in the area of Syria and Phoenicia because the possibility of Greeks and Jews learning the story from each other is most unlikely. He seeks the origin of these tales in West Semitic dynastic

king lists from the second millennium BCE that gave rise to genealogical lists in the first millennium BCE (Darshan 2013: 532–35). I suggest rather that the biblical authors may have been familiar with the Greek materials, especially if we are willing to date the emergence of the biblical literature later in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. In more general terms, it should be noted that the ethnographic concerns of tracing the various races of people to primeval ancestors, as it is found in Genesis 10, is also of interest to Hecataeus of Miletus in the sixth century BCE and Herodotus in the fifth century BCE (Gnuse 2014: 241, 245).

Age of vegetarianism

Both Hesiod and the Bible acknowledge that an early age of vegetarianism among humanity was suceeded by an age in which meat eating became possible.

Hesiod seemingly implies that an early age of vegetarianism was succeeded by a later age when people ate meat (Westermann 1984: 462; Gnuse 2014: 219). In *Works and Days* 109–126, Hesiod describes the golden age in which grain fields bore crops of their own accord for people. In *Works and Days* 127–142, people who lived in the silver age are described. In *Works and Days* 143–155, the people of the bronze age are described. In lines 146–147 it says "they did not eat bread", which may imply that they were meat eaters, as opposed to the first two ages in which people appear to eat the produce of grain, which would be bread (Most 2006: 96–99). Thus, half-way through the primordial ages described by Hesiod, people became meat-eaters. One might say that half-way through the primeval history in Genesis 1–11 people were also allowed to eat meat.

In the biblical tradition people are allowed to eat meat after the flood, according to Gen 9:2–4, and they are specifically commanded to drain the blood from the meat. This may imply that the curse on the ground brought about by Cain was finally removed by the covenant with Noah. This may also be the rest to which Lamech refers when he says at Noah's birth that Noah will bring "rest" to humanity and that is why he will be called Noah (Gen 5:29).

It is worth pointing out that in Hesiod the meat-eaters of the third age are described as horrible ogres, but the biblical text does not so rudely characterize the people after the flood. In *Works and Days* 145–146, Hesiod says of the people of the third age, "terrible and strong they were, and they cared only for the painful works of Ares and for acts of violence" (Most 2006: 98–99). In the biblical text one might say the builders of the Tower of Babel had pride and defied God by building a tower to the heavens, but they are not characterized as strongly as Hesiod stereotypes his folk of the third age.

Segmented genealogies

In both traditions there are genealogies with segmented genealogical lines (listing multiple descendants of an ancestor; Genesis 10 especially).

Mesopotamians generated king lists to speak about leaders through the ages, such as the Sumerian King List. In these lists one person follows sequentially after

another. However, Greek authors and the biblical authors created familial or kinship genealogies. They mentioned persons who are descended from each other and included wives, siblings, and descendants, thus creating segmented genealogies (West 1985: 13; Darshan 2013: 532). In Mesopotamia we rarely find familial and segmented genealogies, we find instead the lists of officials and kings (Hess 1994: 65). The *Catalogue of Women* by Hesiod is horribly fragmentary, but nonetheless one can see that the bulk of the narrative is devoted to mentioning the descendants of significant persons, and the genealogies are usually segmented (Most 2007: 41–261).

John Van Seters has pointed out that the Yahwist version of the genealogies in Genesis 10 are most like Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (Van Seters 1992: 177), and the Yahwist's attempt to combine geography and ethnology is also similar to the writings of Hecataeus of Miletus (Van Seters 1983: 27).

Martin West compares the Hesiod genealogies with many diverse genealogies from various places in the world but observes that Hesiod has the greatest similarities with the biblical genealogies in Genesis 4–11, especially with the "multilinearity" found in both Hesiod and Genesis (West 1985: 13). West has generated charts of the genealogies found in the *Catalogue of Women*, and the vast majority of the listings are segmented genealogies (West 1985: 173–82). They often list people in sets of three and seven (West 1985: 27–29). By bringing together a large number of Greek myths, legends, and historical memories, Hesiod created "a compendium account of the whole story of the nation from the earliest times to the time of the Trojan War or the generation after it" (West 1985: 3).

Hesiod, however, also touched upon the origins of other peoples, including Egyptians, Phoenicians, Arabs, Scythians, Ethiopians, Libyans, and even Pygmies (West 1985: 131; Hess 1994: 70). In this regard, the *Catalogue of Women* begins to seriously remind us of Genesis 10 which also recounts the ancestry of these very same peoples.

Of interest is the parallel between Hellen, son of the Greek flood hero, Deucalion, and Noah. Hellen has three sons, Dorus, Aeolus, and Xuthus, from whom the Greeks are descended, and Noah has Shem, Ham, and Japhet, from whom all people are descended. Both are segmented or multilinear genealogies. This has been described as "an exactly parallel instance" between Genesis 10 and *Catalogue of Women* by commentators (Skinner 1930: 190).

Symbolic allusions to history

Both Genesis 10 and Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* may have symbolic allusions to social and political realities of their age.

Both the *Catalogue of Women* and the Yahwist may be dated to the sixth century BCE, and both may provide subtle political commentary upon the events of that age (Hess 1994: 70). Genesis 10 appears to portray the map of the ancient Near East in the middle of the sixth century BCE after Cyrus the Great had conquered much of Asia Minor but before he conquered Babylon (550–540 BCE). Japheth's descendants appear to include Persia, the area north of Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and the Greek isles. Shem's descendants appear to be the Arameans, Assyrians, Jews, and

the pastoralist peoples of the Transjordan and Arabia. Ham's descendants appear to be Saite Egypt and its economic partners: Crete, Cyprus, and the Canaanites in Palestine, and also the Chaldean Babylonian Empire in Mesopotamia (Gnuse 2014: 240–47). The only unusual item is that the Assyrians should be placed with the Mesopotamians; they should be with the descendants of Ham rather than Shem. But essentially one is reminded of the map of the world in 550 BCE with the Saite rulers in Egypt, the Chaldean Babylonians, and the Persian-Median Empire.

Likewise, it has been suggested that the *Catalogue of Women* reflects the politics of seventh and sixth century BCE Athens (Irwin 2005: 65–84). For example, the aborted marriage of Mestra into the family of Sisyphus may allude to the aborted marriage of the daughter of Megacles (Irwin 2005: 67–73; Rutherford 1995: 114–17). References to Heracles may be allusions to the political life of Peisistratus, and Heracles' fight with the giants of Phlegra may allude to a battle fought there by Peisistratus (Irwin 2005: 74–80). Even though the biblical author might not know the specifics of the allusions found in the *Catalogue of Women*, the biblical author may have thus become familiar with the idea of using genealogies as a metaphor of politics of the age.

The differences between the *Catalogue of Women* and Genesis 10 are significant. Though the *Catalogue of Women* does at times speak in terms of international groups, more than just Greeks, this is very limited, for the real interest is in the Greek world (West 1985: 113–15). Meanwhile, the biblical narrative attempts to trace the genealogy of all the people in the known world (Hess 1994: 70). The *Catalogue of Women* has primarily a Greek focus, while the biblical text is universal (Hess 1994: 70–71). Though in theory the Greek genealogies trace all the Greeks and everyone else back to the flood hero, Deucalion, the biblical text more systematically traces all the people in the world back to Shem, Ham, and Japhet, who are directly the sons of Noah. All people are more effectively unified in the persona of Noah (Hess 1994: 70–71). Theologically this testifies to the biblical author's portrayal of the "one" God as the Lord and master of all human beings.

Migrations and founding cities

In the traditions of both Hesiod and Genesis 1–11, we have accounts of migrations that led to the founding of cities.

The migration and settlement of people is a theme in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, including the founding of Aloeus in Aetolia by Aluc (Most 2007: 64–65), the founding of Pylus by Neleus (Most 2007: 90–91), and Argo founded by Danaus and his daughters (Most 2007: 148–49). This compares to the beginning of the Tower of Babel story wherein people are said to come from the east and dwell in the land of Shinar where they build a city (Van Seters 1992: 180).

Prelude to the contemporary age

The Primeval History and other works by Greek historians are designed to lead up to some significant events.

The Primeval History in Genesis 1–11 ultimately leads up to the exodus by way of telling the story of Israel's patriarchs. Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* leads up to the Trojan War (Van Seters 1988: 22). Herodotus tells accounts of events in the ancient Near East with the intent of describing the story of Persia's abortive invasions of Greece.

The difference between the biblical texts and the Greek authors appears to be in the overall portrayal of people in the Primeval History. The implication of the biblical narrative is that after the sinfulness of the people of the world, especially after the Tower of Babel, God turned to a particular people, Israel, by which the graciousness of God would be manifest. The biblical material has a distinctly theological perspective.

Conclusion

A number of fascinating parallels may be observed between the writings of Hesiod and the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11. Scholars have called for a closer evaluation of these similarities, and I hope that this simple essay accomplishes that task in a worthwhile and interesting fashion.

I am most impressed by several connections, which I believe offer strong evidence that the biblical authors, the Yahwist and the Priestly Editors, had Hesiod's texts at their disposal. Hesiod and the biblical authors share references to the "void" at creation and the divine creation of light and darkness. Their accounts are similar and there are no real parallels in the Mesopotamian stories. Only Hesiod and the biblical text include a woman in what could be described as a "fall" narrative. The descent of modern humanity from the flood hero is a point of convergence in which both Hesiod and the Bible contradict the Mesopotamian accounts of the recreation of people after the flood. Finally, that only the biblical text and Hesiod focus upon segmented genealogies or multilinearity in their genealogical listings may also indicate their divergence from Mesopotamian parallels.

If indeed the biblical authors were familiar with the Hesiodic tradition in the fifth century BCE, it is most significant that the theological perspectives of the biblical authors diverge from Hesiod. The biblical texts appear to testify to a more personal and gracious deity, a greater anthropocentric perspective of the texts, and the equality of all men and women. This should lead us to appreciate even more the message of the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11.

Notes

1 This essay was first published as "Greek Connections: Genesis 1–11 and the Poetry of Hesiod", *BTB* 47 (2017): 131–43.
2 Thomas Bolin (1996); Flemming Nielsen (1997); Jan-Wim Wesselius (1999; 2002); Katherine Stott (2002); Gnuse (2010a).
3 Niels Peter Lemche (1993; 2001; 2011); Thomas L. Thompson (1999a; 1999b); Gerhard Larsson (2004); Likasz Niesiowolski-Spano (2011); Philippe Wajdenbaum (2011); Philippe Guillaume (2014).

4 Brown (1953: 36); Frazer (1983: 8–9); Lamberton (1988: 41–42); Lombard and Lamberton (1993: 15); West (1995: 37); Gnuse (2014: 1–12).

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7 Genesis 1–11 and the Greek historiographers Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus of Halicarnassus[1]

It is a fascinating study to compare the narrative accounts in Genesis 1–11 with the writings of Greek historiographers, especially Hecataeus of Miletus (550–475 BCE), author of the very fragmentary *Periegesis* or *Periodos Ges* ("*Journey around the World*") and *Geneaologiae* ("*Genealogies* or *Histories*"), and Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484–425 BCE), author of "*Histories*". Herodotus has commonly been called the "father of history" due to his consideration of human events without recourse to explanations involving the intervention of the gods. However, Hecataeus has likewise received the same title from some classical scholars (Bury 1909: 8–18), but he does not receive it in our popular imagination because most of his writings have been lost. Hecataeus lived in the sixth century BCE and Herodotus lived in the fifth century BCE. Herodotus is responsible for recalling many of the observations made by Hecataeus (Van Seters 1983: 12). In fact, Herodotus may have plagiarized some of Hecataeus' writings, but the extent to which he did that remains uncertain. This is especially true with the descriptions of Egypt by Herodotus (Pearson 1975: 90; West 1991: 144–60). The famous quote by Herodotus that Egypt is the "gift of the Nile" was probably first articulated by Hecataeus (Pearson 1975: 83–85).

Perhaps contemporary with these Greek historiographers are the epic historian, the Yahwist, from the sixth or fifth centuries BCE, and the Priestly Editors, from the fifth or fourth centuries BCE. The Yahwist and Priestly Editors are both responsible for crafting what we call the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11. The similarities between the narratives of the Primeval History and accounts provided by Greek historiographers deserve attention. Biblical scholars oft have turned to Mesopotamian stories for insight into the narratives of Genesis 1–11, and I myself have done this extensively in the past (Gnuse 2014). But perhaps we should turn our attention to the west and look to Greek accounts. John Van Seters has recommended this approach for many years now (Van Seters 1983; 1992).

Preludes to history

A consideration of the biblical narratives in Genesis 1–11 that are attributed to the Yahwist Historian and Priestly Editors in comparison with the writings of Greek historians, such as Herodotus and Hecataeus, can provide interesting and valuable

insights. The Primeval History in Genesis 1–11 is the prelude to recalling the tales of the patriarchs in Genesis 12–26, 38 and the story of Israel's birth in the Exodus experience recounted in the Book of Exodus. Herodotus told much of his history as a prelude to the wars between Greece and the Persian Empire. Thus, both Genesis and Herodotus were meant to be preludes to the story of the Israelite and Greek peoples respectively. My suspicion is that the biblical author may have been familiar with the writings of Greek historians, especially Herodotus.

The first and most significant observation to make is that the Greek historians were incredulous about some of their received stories, especially those that spoke of the gods and divine intervention, while the biblical authors still worked with the belief that God was active in the lives of the Israelites. Thus, Greek historians were more concerned with human events rather than the biblical concern with the relationship between God and the people. For this reason we correctly view the Greek historians as being much closer to our assumptions of history writing, and we call one or several of them "the father of history writing". But the question we wish to ask is whether the biblical author was familiar with those Greek historians and addressed certain topics because the Greek historians had spoken about them.

Only in the past generation have some biblical scholars begun to pursue an analysis of biblical texts in the Primary History (Genesis through 2 Kings) and Greek texts. Such considerations were not undertaken when early dates were given for the biblical literature. But with the increasing tendency over the past thirty years to lower the dates for the origination of biblical texts, it has become feasible, even advisable to look for connections between Greek texts and biblical narratives. Studies have compared the writings of Herodotus with the Primary History, Genesis through 2 Kings, often analyzing particular biblical texts (Bolin 1996; Nielsen 1997; Wesselius 1999; 2002; Stott 2002; Gnuse 2010a). This inclines us to more readily consider the connections between Herodotus and the Primeval History.

For many years critical scholars located the Yahwist traditions of the Pentateuch in the era of the United Monarchy, specifically in the court of Solomon, and they spoke of the Yahwist as a bard who crafted an epic oral narrative. The Yahwist Narrative constitutes most of the text in Genesis 1–11, and includes Gen 2:4b–25; 3:1–24; 4:1–25; 6:1–8; 7:1–5, 17–24; 8:6–12, 20–22; 9:18–29; 10:8–19, 21, 24–30; 11:1–9, 27–32. Priestly narratives are believed to include Gen 1:1–2:4a; 5:1–32; 6:11–22; 7:6–16; 8:1–5, 13–19; 9:1–17; 10:1–7, 20, 22–23, 31–32; 11:10–26. However, in the past generation increasingly scholars have suggested an exilic or post-exilic date for this material, calling the Yahwist a historian rather than a bard. John Van Seters in several works has defended this position (1975; 1992; 1994). I have contributed an article defending the same notion by suggesting that the Yahwist account of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:1–9 is a parody on the uncompleted ziggurat building efforts of Nabonidus, who fell from power around 540 BCE (Gnuse 2010b). Thus, like Van Seters and others, I date the Yahwist to 500 BCE or later. If we date the Yahwist to 500 BCE or later, and the Priestly materials in Genesis 1–11 are already dated by us to that same era, then comparison with the Greek historians of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE becomes feasible. In the past I have observed the continuities between Hesiod and the narratives in Genesis 1–11,

which I believe are truly significant. In this essay, I would like to consider more closely the continuities between Genesis 1–11 and the Greek historians.

Relationship between the Greek and biblical traditions

Human accomplishments

In both traditions significant accomplishments are achieved by human beings (Genesis 4) rather than being gifts from the gods, as is so often the case in the Mesopotamian traditions.

Greek historians often attribute significant inventions and cultural achievements to human beings. Herodotus mentions Arion of Corinth who composed the first dithyramb (*Histories* 1.23), Glaucus of Chios who discovered how to weld iron (*Histories* 1.25), Philon who established weights and measures, and numerous inventions originated with Egyptians and Babylonians (Van Seters 1992: 83–84).

This is comparable to the individuals in Gen 4:17–22: Cain who built the first city, Jabal who invented pastoralism, Jubal who invented the lyre and the pipe, and Tubal-Cain who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. The biblical author implies that leaving the garden in Genesis 3 may have been a necessary prelude to the emergence of civilization, for quickly in the next chapter we see the description of significant cultural contributions.

The flood

Both the Greek historiographers and the Bible know of a great flood. Hecataeus has a tradition of Deucalion and his three sons surviving the flood (Gnuse 2014: 191), but we have no tradition of a flood account itself in the fragments of his writings (Pearson 1975: 99). The biblical narrative, by contrast, is expansive in Genesis 6–9, seeking especially to respond critically to Mesopotamian versions of the story. According to Hecataeus, the sons of the flood hero gave rise to the three Greek races, the Ionians, Aeolians, and Dorians (Pearson 1975: 99–100), but the biblical author makes their progeny the peoples of the known world. Noah gives birth to Shem, Ham, and Japhet, who are the ancestors to all peoples, thus reflecting the biblical emphasis on one universal God for all humanity.

The flood in the Greek traditions and the biblical text is brought about by human sinfulness, and not rebellion or "noise" as in the Mesopotamian accounts. According to Ovid, the cause for the flood was the proliferation of evil in the Iron Age (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.125ff) (Van Seters 1992: 81). Of course, Ovid is late and not truly a Greek historian, but perhaps he was familiar with earlier sources unbeknownst to us.

Post-flood vineyard

In both Greek historiography and the biblical tradition, the flood hero plants a vineyard after the flood (Genesis 9). No such story exists in Mesopotamia. It is

truly significant that we have a story shared by the Greek and biblical sources, not found in Mesopotamian texts, for it strongly implies the connection between the Bible and the Greek tradition. In Mesopotamia, wine existed prior to the flood, for it is mentioned in the flood narratives as a form of payment. In the Gilgamesh Epic, Utnapishtim gives wine to the workmen who craft the ship. But both the biblical and the Greek tradition portray the appearance of wine as a post-flood phenomenon.

In the biblical tradition, Noah plants a vineyard after leaving the ark (Gen 9:20–27), which produces wine that he then imbibes excessively. The story appears to be disconnected from the flood account, for the persona of Noah is quite different. The only continuity is the presence of the three sons, who, however, live with their father, and no mention is made of their wives. The flood story and the vineyard planting appear to be artificially connected. Furthermore, the three sons play no role in the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, even though they are the chief progenitors of the races in the Table of Nations of Genesis 10.

According to Hecataeus (*Geneaologiae*), Orestheus, the son of Deucalion, discovered the vine after a dog gave birth to a piece of wood, which Orestheus then planted. The wood turned into a vine that produced grapes. He then named his son Phytius and his grandson Oeneus after the vine (Pearson 1975: 99–100; Bertelli 2001: 85; Darshan 2013: 527). Other Greek sources speak of how Amphictyon, the son of Deucalion and brother of Hellen, invented the Greek custom of diluting wine with water, which supposedly Dionysius taught him to do (Darshan 2013: 529).

Three sons of the flood hero

There is reference to the three sons of the flood hero in Greek historians and the Bible. In Mesopotamian accounts the flood hero, Ziusudra or Utnapishtim, becomes immortal and is taken to live in a divine realm, thus having no children to repopulate the world.

In the biblical tradition Noah sires Shem, Ham, and Japhet, who are the ancestors of all the people in the known world according to Genesis 10. In the Greek traditions Hesiod and Hecataeus have a tradition of Deucalion and his sons surviving the flood (Gnuse 2014: 191). Hesiod posits that Deucalion had a son named Hellen, who was the father of three sons, who become the ancestors of the Greeks. Hecataeus has a genealogy similar to that found in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*. But according to Hecataeus, the sons of Deucalion were Pronoos, Orestheus, and Marathonius, and they sired the Ionians, the Dorians, and the Aeolians. Hellen was the son of Pronoos, and thus Hecataeus makes the three great ancestors of the Greeks the direct sons of the flood hero (Pearson 1975: 99; Darshan 2013: 521–23).

Greek logographers also attribute the emergence of peoples in Greece to the flood hero; so generally the narrative of Genesis 10 and Greek traditions agree over Mesopotamian traditions that turn the flood hero into an immortal being with no descendants (Darshan 2013: 523–25). Guy Darshan concludes that if this tradition of the flood hero as the human ancestor of all people is found in Greek and biblical sources, but not Mesopotamian sources, its origin must be on the

periphery of the ancient Near East in the area of Syria and Phoenicia, because the possibility of Greeks and Jews learning the story from each other is most unlikely. I would suggest that perhaps the biblical authors indeed may have known the Greek versions and been influenced by some of their narrative plotline.

In *Histories* 4.45, Herodotus describes the three great land masses and notes how they all have women's names: Europa, Asia, and Libya. In similar fashion the genealogies in Genesis 10 describe all of humanity as descended from the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It has been suggested by some scholars that the biblical author was inspired by this passage in Herodotus (Wajdenbaum 2011: 108–09).

Segmented genealogies

Both the biblical text and the Greek historians have what we would call a "segmented genealogy", that is, the author traces descent through several sons of a significant personage. The flood heroes in the Bible and Greek literature have three sons, who, in turn, give rise to a great number of people. The Mesopotamian genealogies simply trace from an ancestor to one descendant generation after generation, as can be typified by the list of descendants of Hammurabi in the old Amorite Babylonian texts in the early second millennium BCE. The former is a horizontal genealogy; the latter is a vertical genealogy (Darshan 2013: 533). The concurrence of the biblical and the Greek traditions on this type of genealogy over the Mesopotamia model is significant. Furthermore, genealogies in Mesopotamia focused upon the lineage of kings; the biblical and Greek lists are interested in detailing the origins of all people, either in the world or in Greece (Darshan 2013: 534).

Ethnographic concerns

In more general terms, it should be noted that the ethnographic concerns of tracing the various races of people to primeval ancestors, as it is found in Genesis 10, is also of interest to Hecataeus and Herodotus (Gnuse 2014: 241, 245). Greek authors and the biblical authors created familial or kinship genealogies. They mentioned persons who were descended from each other and included wives, siblings, and descendants, thus creating segmented genealogies (West 1985: 13; Darshan 2013: 532). John Van Seters points out that the Yahwist version of the genealogies in Genesis 10 is most like Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (Van Seters 1992: 177). The Yahwist's attempt to combine geography and ethnology is also like the writings of Hecataeus (Van Seters 1983: 27). Scholars reconstruct the geographical observations of Hecataeus in his work *Periegesis* from fragments and from references in other Greek historians, most notably Strabo and Herodotus (Pearson 1975: 34–96). We have over three hundred fragments of *Periegesis* but only thirty-five fragments from the work *Genealogiae* by Hecataeus (Pearson 1975: 96). Dionysius of Halicarnassus described Hecataeus as a writer who recorded the genealogy of many heroes and their deeds, and also recounted the history of different regions and the founding of cities (Toye 1995: 288, 299). This

reminds us of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, and in particular the references to Nimrod in Gen 10:8–12. In general, Hecataeus is more interested in geography and the customs of people living in various regions of the world, whereas the biblical author is more interested in the genealogical relationships between the various descendants of the flood hero Noah.

Beginning of the historic age and language

One can find the literary and historical motif of describing the transition from the primordial age to the historical age with a story describing the emergence of languages.

Herodotus tells of the origin of language in *Histories* 2.2.1–3.1 after an initial discussion of Egyptian traditions and other accounts from the ancient Near East. Likewise, the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, which also tells the story about the origin of languages, provides a transition from the Primeval History to the story of the patriarchs, which is the more specific memory of Israel's beginning. It appears that both authors use an account of the origin of languages to move from something akin to "prehistory" to something akin to "history" (Mandell and Freedman 1993: 164–65).

Fall of a city

Both Herodotus' *Histories* and the Primeval History end with the demise of a city.

Genesis 11 tells how people left the city of Babel after their languages had become confused. Herodotus ends his grand history with the account of the fall of Sestos in *Histories* IX, 115, 118–120. The actual details of the story in Herodotus, with the capture of the fleeing king once the city has fallen and the execution of his son before his eyes, makes the account in Herodotus even more similar to 2 Kgs 24:20–25:7 than the account in Genesis 11. However, there is the same sense of closure in the Primeval History with the demise of a great city, Babel, as there is in the history of Herodotus.

Prelude to history

Both Herodotus and Genesis 1–11 provide a prelude to the real history with a large segment of their narrative. For Herodotus his initial sections form a prelude to the Persian wars with Greece, and Genesis 1–11 is a prelude to the stories of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt under Moses. It has been suggested by scholars that Hecataeus may have done something similar, but too much of his writing has been lost (Bertelli 2001: 93 *et passim*).

Conclusion

There appears to be no specific biblical text that could be said to have been inspired by some passages from the Greek historians. Rather, the connection appears to be

more general. It seems as though the biblical authors are familiar with the agenda of the Greek historians and the accounts they presented. The biblical authors do some things in very similar fashion: the discussion of human accomplishments, the planting of the post-flood vineyard, the three sons who are great progenitors, segmented genealogies, and the ethnographic concerns appear to be narratives or concerns that the biblical authors shared with their western intellectual counterparts, and they did not share them with Mesopotamian sources. Although I cannot make a conclusive statement to this effect, it seems to me that these common elements shared by the Greek and biblical authors over their Mesopotamian predecessors indicates that biblical authors were at least familiar with the writings of Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus of Halicarnassus, and common concerns are to be found in the Primeval History of Genesis 1–11.

Note

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8 Heed your steeds

Achilles' horses and Balaam's donkey[1]

Tales are told in the ancient world about talking animals, and in some instances the animals attempt to provide warning to their riders. Two slightly similar accounts tell of how the horses of Achilles spoke to him before his entrance into battle (Homer, *Iliad*, 19,395–424) and how Balaam's donkey complained of the unfair beating he received from Balaam when trying to avoid the invisible angel of the Lord who stood in Balaam's way (Num 22: 21–34). We turn first to the story of Achilles.

Homer, *Iliad*, Book 19,395–424 (translation is from Murray and Wyatt 1999)

"Then terribly he called aloud to the horses of his father: 'Xanthus and Balius, far-famed children of Podarge, in some other way take thought to bring your charioteer back safe to the army of the Danaans when we have had our fill of war; and do not leave him there dead, as you did Patroclus'.

Then from beneath the yoke spoke to him the horse Xanthus of the swift-glancing feet; suddenly he bowed his head, and all his mane streamed from beneath the yoke pad beside the yoke and touched the ground; and the goddess, white-armed Hera, gave him speech; 'Yes indeed, still for this time will we save you mighty Achilles, though the day of doom is near you, nor will we be the cause of it, but a mighty god and overpowering Fate. For it was not through sloth or slackness of ours that the Trojans were able to strip the armor from the shoulders of Patroclus, but one, far the best of gods, he whom fair-haired Leto bore, slew him among the foremost fighters and gave glory to Hector. But for us two, we could run swift as the West Wind's blast, which, men say, is of all winds the fleetest; but for you yourself it is fated to be vanquished in fight by a god and a mortal'.

When he had thus spoken, the Erinyes checked his voice. Then, in great agitation, spoke to him swift-footed Achilles: 'Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? You need not at all. Well I know even of myself that it is my fate to perish here, far from my dear father and my mother; but even so I will not cease until I have driven the Trojans to their fill of war'. He spoke, and with a cry drove among the foremost his single-hoofed horses".

As we reflect upon this account, certain key elements may be observed:

1) The hero is ready to move forward toward his mission.
2) His mission is to kill or destroy a people, the Trojans.
3) He is using an animal for transportation.
4) He implies that the horses were responsible for the death of Patroclus.
5) The goddess Hera enables the animal, Xanthus, to speak.
6) The animal defends himself from an unjust accusation of causing the death of Patroclus.
7) The horse warns of the hero's death, if he goes forward.
8) The hero becomes agitated or angry with the animal.
9) The hero moves forward despite the warning.
10) There is role reversal in that an animal displays intelligence and the great Achilles has to listen and respond to his steeds, who would normally follow his commands.
11) Presumably in battle the heroic steeds will perform in a manner so as to protect the great warrior, Achilles.

With these categories in mind we turn the text of Balaam and his donkey in Num 22:21–34.

Numbers 22:21–34

Commentators have sensed that this story has been inserted into its present literary context. One may observe that in Num 22:21 God tells Balaam to go on his mission, but to say only what God tells him to say. Then in Num 22:23 the text declares that God became angry with Balaam for simply going. In Num 22:33 the angel of the Lord admits to being ready to kill Balaam with a sword. In Num 22:34 Balaam says "I will return home". But then in Num 22:35 the angel of the Lord tells Balaam to continue the journey. Threatening to kill Balaam for moving forward as well as for beating his donkey, and then telling him to continue the journey are divine messages seriously in tension with each other. In Num 22:21 we read that Moabite officials accompany Balaam, but they are absent in the account of Balaam and the donkey. To me this makes it so obvious that this delightful account of Balaam and his donkey has been stuck into the greater Balaam narrative (Noth 1968: 178–80; Budd 1984: 272; Barre 1997: 260; Levine 2000: 139, 154–55).

Some scholars have expressly stated their belief that this narrative is a late addition to the Balaam traditions. In general, Numbers 22–24 portrays Balaam rather positively, but later narratives portray him rather negatively (Num 25:1–16; 31:8, 16 [P texts]; Deut 23:5–6; Jos 13:22; 24:9–10; 2 Pet 2:15–16; Jude 1:11), and since Balaam and the donkey vignette portray Balaam as rather obtuse, one could assume this story to be a late insertion into Balaam traditions (Barre 1997: 255; Levine 2000: 139, 154). Commentators often suggest the late pre-exilic era (Rouillard 1980; Seebass 1995; Way 2009: 58–59). Some scholars

explicitly view the story as a post-exilic addition (Schmitt 1994; Levine 2000: 237; Sals 2008).

Numbers 22:21–34 and the *Iliad*, Book 19, 395–424, compared

Balaam's experience with his donkey bears some resemblance to the narrative of Achilles and his horse Xanthus. Scholars have pointed out some of these similarities in the past,[2] but I have tried to be more comprehensive.

1) The hero is moving toward his mission: Num 22:22b, "Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him". Achilles is riding off to battle.
2) From the prior narrative we know that Balaam is supposed to curse the Israelites, as Achilles was seeking to destroy the Trojans.
3) He used an animal for transportation: Num 22:22b, "Now he was riding on the donkey". Achilles is using two horses.
4) The rider reacts with anger toward the animal: Num 22:27b, "he struck the donkey with his staff", whereas Achilles spoke stern words.
5) The deity enables the animal to speak: Num 22:28a, "Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam". Hera enabled the horses to speak to Achilles.
6) The animal defends himself from the unjust beating he has received: Num 22:28a, "What have I done to you, that you struck me these three times"? and Num 22:30b, "Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way"? (This is truly comic, picture the donkey whipping Balaam!) The horses of Achilles reject the unfair accusation that they failed Patroclus.
7) The donkey really warned Balaam of his impending potential death by his refusal to move: Num 22:31a, 33,

   > Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; … "The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let it live".

   Achilles' horses also warn him of his impending death.
8) Unlike Achilles, however, Balaam does not get angry with the donkey, he beats him simply to urge him forward.
9) The hero continues his journey: Num 22:35, "The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, 'Go with the men; but speak only what I tell you to speak'. So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak". I would suggest that this final verse is not part of the original tale of Balaam and the donkey, but it has been added to facilitate the insertion of the narrative by transitioning from Balaam's desire to return home and the greater plot-line of Balaam serving Balak. Achilles does ride into battle.

10) The theme of role reversal in the biblical story is most significant, for the otherwise simple donkey can see the otherworldly angel of the Lord and speak, while the supposedly clairvoyant prophet must listen to his donkey and only subsequently see the vision of the angel of the Lord. Achilles, however, remains heroic in the Greek account.
11) As Achilles' steeds will serve him well in battle, Balaam's little donkey saved his life by stopping, for otherwise the angel of the Lord would have killed Balaam (Gray 1903: 335).

One cannot say that the Balaam and his donkey account is a serious form-critical parallel to the story of Achilles and Xanthus, for there are too many differences. Achilles gives an initial speech to the horses to bring him back alive and subsequently tells the horses that he was aware of his impending death at Troy. Balaam says nothing comparable to this. In the Balaam account much attention is given to the angel of the Lord who appears to the donkey alone in the beginning, but ultimately speaks to Balaam. Also, there is the humorous activity of the donkey avoiding the angel, squeezing past the angel, and stooping down before the angel, stubbornly refusing to move, while Balaam unfairly beats the donkey, which makes the reader emotionally side with the intelligent donkey over the stupid prophet—a complete role reversal. There is nothing comparable with Achilles and his horses. These differences comprise much of the narrative in the two accounts, so any formal comparison is unrealistic.

Furthermore, these points of comparison may provide interesting similarities, but I would like to see far more similarities between the two accounts before I hazard the theory that the biblical author was directly reworking his tale from the Iliad. I would like to see numerous form-critical similarities that involve the bulk of both narratives before I seriously suggest any real form-critical dependence.

Irony and theology in Number's narrative

Having said that, I am struck by how the biblical narrative might appear to be an ironic spoof on the Greek narrative in the Iliad. Consider the following ironic twists provided by the biblical narrative in contrast to the story about Achilles:

1) Instead of a great warrior, the almost semi-divine Achilles, the biblical figure is the dark prophetic personage, Balaam. In this particular narrative Balaam is portrayed as a buffoon who unwittingly beats his poor donkey who is actually trying to save his life. Notice that Balaam never did apologize to the donkey. In effect, we have the story of an ass riding a donkey.
2) The donkey is simply a little beast of burden, not the noble steed of Achilles, Xanthus, who was sired by a noble line of horses, in particular, Podarge.
3) When the animals speak, Balaam's donkey is a little whiner, who complains about his treatment, whereas Xanthus speaks with grand nobility, as do all the characters in the *Iliad*.

4) One could finally say that the biblical story is about little folk, a cranky old prophet and his grumpy little donkey, whereas the *Iliad* is about grand characters, people, and animals alike, who are divine or semi-divine in their status.

Perhaps the last observation leads us to a significant theological observation. In the biblical account the one true persona who stands out as noble is the angel of the Lord, which may be a circumlocution for God (Noth 1968: 179). People, like Balaam, are humble human figures before God, not like the great Greek heroes. They are what they are by the grace of God.

The great prophet, Balaam, is humbled when the theophany of the angel of the Lord initially comes to his lowly donkey and not to him. The visionary cannot see the vision, but the little donkey can. The donkey can "see" and can "speak" while Balaam cannot "see" and is silent. The great clairvoyant is mocked.[3] Not only Balaam, but all diviners are ridiculed, for this is a "picaresque fable mocking the reputed clairvoyance of diviners" (Levine 2000: 138). This puts in clear perspective that it is not the prophet or seer who obtains a vision or a revelatory message from God, but rather it is God who provides the revelation to the prophet. From his humbling experience Balaam learns that Yahweh is the sole supreme deity (Sals 2008: 324–26). Ulrike Sals further opines that in its present form the total Balaam account, with the donkey narrative included, does not say that God changes his or her mind, but rather God wishes to teach Balaam a lesson. Balaam will go on his journey, but only on God's terms, for God is the hegemon, not Balak, and Balaam will take orders only from God (Sals 2008: 326). In sum, it is the majesty of God that is dramatically affirmed by the biblical narrative.

As a final point I might observe that while talking animals occur with frequency in Greek literature, there are only two such examples in biblical literature, Balaam's donkey and the talking snake in Genesis 3. Since there is similarity between the accounts of Achilles and Balaam, that makes me suspect some Greek influence with the tale of the talking donkey. At this point we may appeal to critical observations made by Andrew Knapp about cross-cultural comparisons of genres. He noted that a text need not be identical in form-critical structure to a parallel text to be worthy of genre comparison. If the two texts address the same issues with the same content and intentionality in respect to their social-historical contexts, they are worthy of comparison and consideration as being similar in genre. He speaks of such texts as being part of a common "rhetorical genre" (Knapp 2013; 2015: 31–35). The image of talking animals warning their owner of imminent danger as he moves forward with his mission might be such an example, for indeed both stories are unusual and distinctive accounts.

Thus, if our biblical author was familiar with the *Iliad*, and this story in particular, we can see a theological message in the element of spoof. The biblical author disavows the grandeur of the great Greek epic with its many gods and divinely generated human characters. In the biblical worldview there is God and simple finite humanity under that God. One might sense a biblical critique of the hybris found in the portrayal of the great Greek heroes. The *Iliad* most likely takes

shape in the sixth century BCE, at the latest. If one dates the biblical text to the sixth century BCE Yahwist, as many scholars now do, it is possible that the biblical author knew the *Iliad*. If we suggest that the story of Balaam and his donkey is a later insertion into the Yahwist narrative, which would date it perhaps to the fifth century BCE or later, then the possibility increases that the biblical author knew this great piece of epic Greek literature. If it is possible that the biblical author was familiar with this literature, it certainly would be probable that the biblical author would not miss the opportunity to spoof the hybris of the great heroes in the greatest Greek epic. What I am seriously suggesting is that biblical literature is generated by highly educated people, scribal intelligentsia, who would be familiar with the great literature of their world, and who can interact with this literature in various ways. Sometimes they appropriate a Greek story and change its message, and sometimes they simply respond to images and ideas from a Greek narrative. I believe the author of Balaam and the donkey is looking at the story of Achilles and his horses out of the corner of his eye.

Conclusion

This article has significance for greater issues in biblical scholarship by suggesting that the biblical author was familiar with classic Greek literature. It implies a late date for at least some of the Pentateuchal text, placing the creation of narratives into the Persian or the Hellenistic period. The epics of Homer emerged in the seventh or sixth centuries BCE, and one might assume that the Judahite scribal tradition would not become familiar with them until the fifth or the fourth centuries BCE. This evaluation reinforces the arguments of those scholars who have assigned the emergence of the biblical narratives to the Persian and Hellenistic eras (Lemche 1993; 2001; Bolin 1996; Thompson 1999a; 1999b). I would suggest that both the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History underwent a long process of supplementation extending down into the Hellenistic era, and the evidence of Greek influence upon some biblical narratives testifies to that. I have proposed this argument in previous writings (Gnuse 1998; 2007).

Notes

1 This essay was first published as "Heed Your Steeds: Achilles' Horses and Balaam's Donkey", *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences* 4(6) (2017): 1–5.
2 Burr (1887: 526); Krenkel (1888: 32); West (1997: 391); Rouillard (1980: 118); Way (2009: 53); Wajdenbaum (2011: 185–86).
3 Ashley (1993: 457–59); Barre (1997: 261); Levine (2000: 139, 154); Blumenthal (2006: 83–85).

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9 Samson and Heracles revisited[1]

"The Samson narrative has had a long history as a source of inspiration for the artist's brush, the novelist's pen, the musician's instrument, and even the film producer's movie camera" (Kim 1993: 1). Scholars have analyzed the passages in Judges 13–16 in many different ways over the years. My interest in this article is to view the Samson narratives as a late addition to the Deuteronomistic History, in the Persian or Hellenistic periods, and how they demonstrate the biblical author's great familiarity with Greek literature and customs, especially the legends of Heracles or Hercules.

Dating the traditions

A generation ago Othniel Margalith evaluated the similarities between the Samson narratives in Judges 13–16 and the various legends concerning the Greek hero Heracles, as well as some other Greek personages. He discussed some interesting common themes, motifs, and plotlines. He concluded that the biblical authors became familiar with the Heracles accounts by way of contact with the Philistines who would have transmitted such Greek narratives to their Israelite neighbors early in Israelite history (Margalith 1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1987). Other scholars voiced comparable opinions about the Philistine connection and occasionally mentioned the existence of Mycenaean trading ports along the Palestinian coast as possible entry points for such literary influence, including the city of Jaffa in the vicinity of Philistia (Gray 1967: 183, 262).

There are problems with this hypothesis. It is to be highly doubted that the Philistines preserved their Mycenaean Greek heritage for a prolonged period of time in order to transmit this literary heritage to the biblical authors later in Israelite or Jewish history (Butler 2009: 337). Archaeological research indicates that the Philistines developed a Semitic cultural identity by the late eleventh and early tenth centuries BCE (Trude Dothan 1982: 1, 20, 217–18, 251 et passim; Trude and Moshe Dothan 1992: 174–77, 207–08, 250–51). Thus, stories about Heracles could only have been transmitted to Israelites in the pre-monarchical period and then subsequently had to be preserved in oral tradition for centuries before the Deuteronomistic historians inherited them. This is a most unlikely explanation for these narratives, unless you date the written biblical text of Samson prior to 1000

BCE (Cohen 1970). The same can be said for suggesting that the Mycenaean trading ports in Palestine and Egypt were a source of literary transmission.

A more significant problem for this theory is the age of the Heracles traditions themselves. Although the narratives about Heracles are often set in the late Bronze Age, in the Mycenaean period, the narratives are not seen to be that old according to classical scholars. Classical scholars admit that the dating of the Heracles legends is difficult, and indeed some are very old. But usually classical scholars do not push the earliest attestation of the traditions of Heracles back past the eighth century BCE. They point to the sixth century BCE when the traditions truly began to develop and the fifth century BCE as the period when the Heracles stories began to be portrayed in art and architecture (Parker 1996: 70, 84–85, 99–100; Padilla 1996: 6–18; Schacter 1998: 334; Edelman 2015: 236). Homer and Hesiod know details about Heracles, but they show no familiarity with the more developed stories of the famous labors of Heracles. The twelve labors of Heracles are first mentioned by Stesichorus in the sixth century BCE and by Pisander, whose dates are uncertain though he often is placed in the sixth century BCE also (Cohen 1970: 133). It is in the late sixth century BCE that the Greek historian, Hecataeus of Miletus, refers to Heracles as the beginning of his "history" of the Greeks (Van Seters 1983: 11). Commentators may refer to the scholarly work of Martin Nilsson, who suggested that the persona of Heracles goes back to the Mycenaean age, wherein possibly he was a historical ruler of Tiryns or Thebes and served a ruler of Mycenae, called Eurystheus (the person who required Heracles to perform the labors in the legends). But a closer reading of Nilsson's work indicates that he believed the form in which we now have the accounts is after Homer and Hesiod (Nilsson 1932: 194–211). Thus, if there was any communication of these narratives from the Greek world to the biblical authors, it would have come in the fifth century BCE, far too late for our Deuteronomistic historian who was placed in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE by older biblical scholars.

In the past generation, however, biblical scholars have challenged the old paradigms for dating the Deuteronomistic History, and more authors suggest a post-exilic date; some even place the final completion of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History into the Hellenistic period after 330 BCE (Lemche 1993; 2001; Bolin 1996; Thompson 1999a; 1999b). Philippe Guillaume (2004) dated Samson stories earlier than the Hellenistic era, but suggested the final Deuteronomistic History arose in the second century BCE. Other scholars who date the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History in the Persian period around 400–350 BCE suggest Greek historiographical influence upon the literature, especially from Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE; cf. Nielsen 1997). Jan-Wim Wesselius (1999; 2002: 1–103) marshalled a tremendous number of parallels between Herodotus and the Primary History. Robert Gnuse (2010) maintained that the Joseph Novella reflects influence from Herodotus. John Van Seters (1983: 8–54) early on called for a comparison of Herodotus and Greek historiographers with the Deuteronomistic History. With these theories the Samson narratives would be dated much later, distinctly in the post-exilic era.

This later dating raises anew the possibility for considering the Greek influence upon the Samson narratives, but now the focus will be on the possibility that the biblical authors became familiar with the traditions of Heracles and other Greek stories in the Persian era, and possibly even in the Hellenistic period, if you are so inclined to date the final production of the Deuteronomistic traditions that late.

Another factor to consider is the appearance that the Samson narratives were placed into the text of the book of Judges secondarily, for these stories do not fit the pattern of the stories elsewhere in the book, nor does Samson appear to be like the other judges, who lead armies in battle. Judges 13–16 appear to be inserted into our present text, and most commentators have assumed this to be the case (Gray 1967: 156; Kim 1993: 57–59). That the Samson narratives could be a late addition into the stories of the judges is made more likely by the omission of Samson's name among the judges mentioned in the Hebrew text of 1 Sam 12:9–11 (although the Greek text has his name). This raises the possibility for a very late date for this material, even down into the Hellenistic period.

Scholars have proposed other sources for the emergence of some of the themes and imagery in the Samson narratives. Some look east to Mesopotamia for the source of inspiration, and Gilgamesh is offered as the image of a strongman whose exploits and traditions lie behind the Samson narratives (Gray 1967: 185). John Gray also suggested that Gilgamesh narratives influenced the Heracles tradition (Gray 1967: 185). Samson's battle with the lion may recall the motif of Gilgamesh as the lion-tamer (Gray 1967: 262). Enkidu and the Mesopotamian wild man, the *lahmu*, have been suggested as good comparative examples of a wild hero (Wenning 1982; Mobley 1997). The Assyrian god Ninurta is also suggested as a source of inspiration (Guillaume 2004: 192–96).

Samson's connection with solar imagery is not to be overlooked. The suggestion is made that a local cult center in Palestine, Beth-Shemesh, may be the source of Samson imagery, and the city's very name implies that solar devotion existed there (Moore 1895: 325; Gray 1967: 184). Samson's name is derived from the Hebrew word for the "sun" and may mean "little sun" or the adjectival word "solar" (Boling 1975: 225). If the foxes with firebrands symbolize the rust fungus in Palestine, such a fungus is caused by the sun, which Samson symbolizes (Gray 1967: 265; Martin 1975: 169). Samson's blindness may symbolize the sun setting in the evening. It has been observed that solar myths appear to be involved in the Greek Heracles traditions also (Soggin 1981: 231).

Relationship of Samson and Heracles

Over the year numerous observations have been made about parallels between accounts in the Samson narratives and Greek myths and legends, especially those connected to Heracles or Hercules.[2] In fact, many commentators, from the church historian Eusebius in the fourth century up to the modern era, have noted these parallels (Moore 1895: 364). Narratives and motifs common to both the Samson

narratives and the Heracles legends, and Greek legends and customs in general, include the following:

1) A divine being is present at the conception of the hero (if the angel is the one who impregnates Manoah's wife during their conversation). (see below)
2) The angel of God ascends into heaven before Manoah and his wife in somewhat similar fashion to how Heracles is assumed into heaven from his funeral pyre. (see below)
3) The hero is a magical strong man, with strength presumably from the divine realm.
4) The hero does not lead an army but acts as an individual. This makes Samson unusual compared to the rest of the heroes in the book of Judges.
5) The hero kills a lion with his bare hands. (see below)
6) The hero kills the lion in conjunction with some form of courtship or marriage. (see below)
7) The hero loses his beloved. The Philistines burn the woman of Timnah; Heracles loses his wife, Deianeira, who commits suicide.
8) The hero captures foxes (Heracles) or jackals (Samson). Heracles also captures the Erymanthian boar, the Cretan bull, and the hind of Artemis (Moore 1895: 364). (see below)
9) These foxes or jackals are used to burn down fields. (see below)
10) The hero is bound with cords, but breaks them in order to escape his enemies. (see below)
11) The hero fights an army.
12) The hero uses an unusual weapon in combat. (see below)
13) The spring of Lehi is opened to produce water for Samson, like the warm baths are opened for Hercules by the Sicilian nymphs (Moore 1895: 364).
14) The hero demonstrates sexual strength. (see below)
15) The gates of Gaza are for Samson like the pillars of Heracles, which Heracles places in the west. (see below)
16) The hero is betrayed by a woman and eventually loses his life. (see below)
17) There is a descent into darkness: blindness for Samson, the underworld for Heracles.
18) The hero is forced to do menial labor for someone weaker than himself: Samson labors when he is blind and weak; Heracles serves the weaker Eurystheus to perform the twelve labors.
19) The hero chooses how he should die. Samson pulls down the temple and Heracles opts for the funeral pyre rather than death by poison.
20) The hero gropes in darkness: Samson seeking the pillars of the Philistine temple and Heracles in the underworld.
21) A youth leads the hero to his death. The young boy leads Samson to the pillars and the son of Heracles lights the funeral pyre for Heracles to die.
22) In general, both Heracles and Samson could be viewed as "tricksters" and womanizers (Niditch 1990; Thury and Devinney 2013: 499). For example,

Heracles has sex with the many daughters of Thespios, and he tricks Atlas into obtaining the apples of the Hesperides and into taking up the weight of the sky once again, while Samson's escapades with the riddle, the foxes, women, and the gates of Gaza also portray him as a trickster.

Parallels with other Greek legends and customs

There are parallels between the Samson stories and other Greek legends and customs, which are worth mentioning, even though there are no analogs in the Heracles traditions.

1) As bees nested in the lion's body before Samson, bees are portrayed as nesting in a dead human body or animal in Greek literature. (see below)
2) The hero poses unanswerable riddles. Samson challenged the Philistines with a riddle, Greek heroes or founders of cities posed unanswerable riddles to people, and clever sayings comparable to riddles were exchanged at Greek symposia or weddings. (see below)
3) Activities that occurred during Samson's attempted marriage to the woman of Timnah correspond to the customs of Greek weddings in the classical period. (see below)
4) The hero has strength in his hair. Other Greek legendary figures provide better examples than Heracles to parallel Samson's magical hair. (see below)
5) The hero is betrayed by a woman who cuts his hair. Again, other Greek personages provide the best parallels. (see below)
6) The temple pulled down by Samson seems to be Greek, especially with the reference to the two central supporting pillars. For some scholars it appears to describe a Homeric megaron or a temple at Knossos (Soggin 1981: 255; Margalith 1987: 70).

To be sure, not all of these parallels can be shown to have a truly tight connection to each other; no one Greek story has a form-critical similarity with any narrative in the Samson saga. In the past, I have found such parallels in Greek literature with other stories in the Deuteronomistic History, including the account of the women who danced at Shiloh (Judg 21:16–24) and the incident when David poured water on the ground (2 Sam 23:13–17) (Gnuse 1998; 2007). However, the sheer number of these potential Samson parallels with Greek literature, especially the Heracles legends, should lead us to suspect that surely the biblical author of the Samson stories was familiar with the Greek literary tradition. Some critical scholars have attempted to reject the connection between the Samson stories and the Heracles legends (Cohen 1970). I remain unconvinced by such efforts. For example, Gary Cohen believes that since the Samson texts were in written form by 1000 BCE and the Heracles legends arose in the sixth century BCE, the direction of influence could not be from Heracles stories to Samson stories (Cohen 1970: 133–34). If we date the Samson narratives to the post-exilic era, needless to say, this criticism collapses.

Consideration of specific themes

Authors who have written legends about Heracles or Hercules which can be compared to the Samson stories include Sophocles (c. 497–406 BCE), Euripides (480–406 BCE), Lycophron (early third century BCE), Theocritus (early third century BCE), Apollodorus the Grammarian (c. 180–120 BCE), Diodorus Siculus (writing 60–30 BCE), Ovid (43 BCE–18 CE), Pausanias (110–180 CE), and Lucian of Samosata (125–180 CE). The images they provide can be compared with the Samson traditions, but Homer and Hesiod are too early to give us good comparisons. This would imply that these classical and Hellenistic authors drew upon legends of Heracles that evolved after the time of Homer and Hesiod, in the sixth century BCE and later. Classical and Hellenistic sources probably contain traditions that predate the authors who recorded them, but one must assume that the traditions recorded by those authors reflect the form of the legends in only a few centuries prior to the author's activity. This would locate these accounts again in the sixth through the third centuries BCE. To me, this indicates a post-exilic date for when the Greek imagery of Heracles would have been available for the biblical author.

If we proceed with this new paradigm for the Samson narratives, that they are inspired by Greek narratives, especially the Heracles traditions, after the Babylonian exile, perhaps it would be beneficial to consider the relationship of some of the Samson themes with literary references in classical and Hellenistic authors. Above, I have recorded numerous similarities between Samson and Heracles and some general Greek traditions. Some of these themes deserve a more detailed consideration.

Conception of the hero

Heracles is descended from the god Zeus and Aikmene, the wife of Amphytryon and granddaughter of Perseus the Danaid (Apollodorus, *The Library*, II.4.7–8; Hyginus, *Fabula*, 29), which of course, explains his supernatural strength. But whether Samson has divine parentage is rather vague in the text. Most commentators assume that Manoah was truly the paternal father of Samson after the announcement by the angel, but some firmly believe the text implies that the angel impregnated Manoah's wife during their conversation together (Margalith 1986b: 401; Guillaume 2004: 166–67; Spronk 2010: 26). In Judg 13:6, Manoah's wife said that the messenger "came to me", which is a vague allusion that could mean a sexual encounter. Elsewhere, this expression (Gen 16:4; 19:31–32; 29:23–31; 30:3; 38:2–18; 2 Sam 11:4–5; 12:24; Ezek 23:44) refers to a man getting a woman pregnant. Manaoh's subsequent concern with encountering this messenger might subtly imply that he had concerns about what the angel messenger might have done with his wife. Furthermore, prior to the birth of Samson there is no reference to Manoah having sex with his wife, which we usually read in a text speaking about the impending birth of a child. So divine and human parentage may be a common theme that unites Samson and Hercules. That both Samson and Hercules

could die tragic deaths, even though they were half-divine, is another interesting common motif.

Angel of God

The Angel of God ascended from Manoah and his wife in rather dramatic fashion according to Judg 13:20, "When the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar while Manoah and his wife looked on; and they fell on their faces to the ground". A connection has been made between the drama of this scene and the death of Heracles on the funeral pyre lit by his son (Margalith 1986b: 404).

Heracles was inadvertently killed by Deianeira, his wife, with loving innocence, when she gave him a shirt that poisoned him. She subsequently committed suicide. Because he was doomed to die, he chose to be immolated on a funeral pyre on Mt. Oeta, which was lit by his son.[3]

The account which is most reminiscent of the ascent of Manoah's Angel of God is found in Apollodorus, *The Library*, II.7.7, "While the pyre was burning, it is said that a cloud passed under Hercules and with a peal of thunder wafted him up to heaven" (Frazer 1921: 1:271). Lucian, in *Hermotimus*, 7, describes the aftermath of Heracles' death thus,

> Think of the story of Heracles when he was burned and deified on Mount Oeta; he threw off the mortal part of him that came from his mother and flew up to heaven, taking the pure and unpolluted divine part with him the part that the fire had separated off
>
> (Kilburn 1959: 6:273)

This account stresses the divine nature of Heracles, reminiscent of the divine nature of the Angel of God. In similar fashion, Diodorus Siculus, in *The Library of History*, IV.38.4–5, says, "And immediately lightning fell from the heavens and the pyre was wholly consumed … in accordance with the words of the oracle, he had passed from among men into the company of the gods" (Oldfather 1967: 2:467). This account refers to lightning which reminds us of the flame mentioned in the account of Judg 13:20.

When comparing the ascension of the Angel of God in Judg 13:20 and the death of Heracles, we may observe the following similarities: 1) ascension of the divine being, 2) the presence of a numinous flame or cloud, and 3) entry into the divine realm. Although the two accounts do not appear to be too similar, there are enough connections to suggest that the biblical author may have been familiar with Greek narratives.

Killing the lion

Greek authors tell two tales about how Heracles killed the Nemean lion and the lion of Cithaeron. Heracles chased the Nemean lion into a cave and killed him

there with his bare hands. The fifth century BCE playwright Euripides alludes to it in *The Madness of Hercules*, 153–54 when he says, "Or that Nemean lion? which he snared, Yet saith he slew with grip of strangling arms" (Way 1950: 141). In the second century BCE, Apollodorus refers to it (*The Library*, II.5.1), "and putting his arm round its neck held tight till he had choked" (Frazer 1921: 1:187). In the first century BCE, Diodorus Siculus in *The Library of History*, IV.11.4 records, "when the beast retreated into the cleft, after closing up the other opening, he followed in after it and grappled with, and winding his arms about its neck choked it to death" (Oldfather 1967: 2:379). Other authors refer to the Nemean lion also (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 326; Theocritus, *Idyll*, XXV, 265–267).

In Judg 14:6 it says of Samson that, "he tore the lion apart barehanded as one might tear apart a kid". All of these references are brief, but nonetheless we can make some pertinent observations. The similarities are as follows: 1) the hero killed a lion, 2) with his bare hands, 3) without a weapon, and 4) due to his great strength. These four parallels deserve distinct mention because many stories are told of heroes killing a lion with a weapon, and that makes these Samson and Heracles parallels more significant, for these two heroes did the deed without need of a weapon.

There are other accounts of Heracles killing the lion of Cithaeron, which bring the lion killing actions of our two heroes into greater proximity. In *The Library*, II.4.10, Apollodorus recalls how Heracles killed a lion for King Thespius in order to win the sexual favors of the fifty daughters of Thespius,

> each night, as Hercules went forth to the hunt, Thespius bedded one of his daughters with him … Thus Hercules … had intercourse with them all. And having vanquished the lion, he dressed himself in the skin and wore the scalp as a helmet (Frazer 1921: 1:179) (Cf. Hyginus, *Fabula*, 162)

Other Greek heroes also subdued lions to win fair maidens. Admetus subdued a lion to obtain Alcestis (Hyginus, *Fabula*, 50), Pilius killed a lion to win Cycnus (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII.371–373), Bellerophon slew the lion-headed Chimera to marry Philanoe (Homer, *Iliad*, VI.181–195; Apollodorus, *The Library*, II.3.1–2), and Alcatus killed a lion to marry Megara, daughter of Megareus (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, I.41.3) (Margalith 1987: 67). They used weapons, whereas Heracles and Samson did not.

Samson did not have to kill his lion in order to wed the Philistine woman, but he was on his way to make wedding arrangements, so there is an interesting parallel here. I concur with the observation made by Margalith that the Samson and Heracles stories alone share the two themes that the hero kills the lion with his bare hands and this action is connected to courtship and marriage of the hero, and that this similarity is worthy of our attention (Margalith 1987: 66).

Bees

As bees nested in the lion's body for Samson, bees nested in the skull of Onesilus, which the people of Amathus fastened over the city gate, according to Herodotus,

The Histories, V.115 (Moore 1895: 332). Virgil speaks of Aristeus, whose bees abandoned him, but after he offered oxen as a sacrifice to Zeus, a new swarm of bees appeared for him in the carcass of the oxen. In general, bees are a common motif in Greek literature, but not in the ancient Near East or the biblical tradition.[4]

An impossible riddle

According to Steve Weitzman, Samson's unsolvable riddle in Judg 14:12–14 is comparable to the settlement riddles posed either by or to Greek personages, such as Mopsus, Leucippus of Sparta, Dido of Carthage, and others in their interactions with indigenous people in the Mediterranean world. In some instances, when the indigenous people could not answer the difficult riddle, then Greeks were allowed to settle in that region, as with Mopsus who dispossessed the Carians from Colophon. In other accounts, the Greeks were allowed to settle after answering the difficult riddle. Sometimes the riddle was a clever request with a hidden meaning, as with Dido's request for land that could be covered by an oxhide, when she intended to cut the oxhide into the thinnest possible strings to encircle land, or the interpretation of the stay for a "day and a night", which Leucippus interpreted to mean an indefinite period of time in order for his own people to settle the land. Most of these accounts are attributed to eighth century BCE experiences (Weitzman 2002). Weitzman further suggested, that in comparable fashion, Samson is invading Philistine territory, and his unsolvable riddle is a prelude not for Israelite settlement on Philistine territory, but for the destruction of Philistine territory. It is a counter-colonizing tale (Weitzman 2002: 170–73). The character of the riddle appears to be Greek in terms of its function. In addition, Greeks might have been more familiar with bees and the reference to bees in the riddle, since apiculture (bee-raising) was practiced in Greece, while Israelites were familiar only with wild honey (Margalith 1986a: 228).

Another plausible suggestion by Azzan Yadin maintained that Samson's riddle is not really a riddle, since it is impossible to answer. Nor does the Philistine response really acknowledge that honey came out of a lion's carcass; it simply refers to a lion and honey. The expression is really a "skolion" or a "capping song", a saying that would be uttered in Greek symposia or Greek weddings in contests between individuals. Furthermore, the original version of this Samson and Philistine saying contest may have equated the honey with the sweetness of sex and the lion with the strength of the bridegroom, and the killing of the lion was secondarily connected to the narrative (Yadin 2002, who assumes early transmission of motifs through the Philistines; cf. Eynikel 2006). Either of these two theories acknowledges the influence of Greek thought upon this narrative.

Greek wedding customs

Samson's marriage ceremony with the woman of Timnah reflects Greek wedding customs (Oakley and Sinos 1991: 22–37; Yadin 2002: 416–18). In Greece it was customary for the wedding ceremony to be held in the house of the bride's

father, and Samson accordingly went to his father-in-law's home. In Greek wedding banquets, songs were sung and *skolia* were sung and recited (Oakley and Sinos 1991: 23; Yadin 2002: 416). These *skolia* might be comparable to Samson's "riddle" and the Philistine response to Samson. In Greek society there was a best man for the groom, the *thyroros*, whose responsibility included guarding the bridal chamber while the bride and groom made love (Oakley and Sinos 1991: 36–37; Yadin 2002: 418). Israelite society had no such role. Ironically, Samson's best man did not guard the wedding chamber; he got the bride instead. In Greek society the actual marriage was consummated after the wedding banquet, which explains why Samson's bride could be given away once he left the banquet, for he had not really married the girl yet. One striking detail, which may be a coincidence, is that in Athens by the end of the fourth century BCE, it was recommended that wedding banquets be limited to thirty people (Oakley and Sinos 1991: 22). Would this explain why Samson had thirty men to accompany him (Judg 14:11), which may be part of the customs (Judg 14:10) connected to a wedding feast? If so, this might be a small detail to enable us to date the influence of Greek culture upon the Samson traditions to the Hellenistic period. The entire wedding feast of Samson can be explained by customs found in classical Greece, which means that the narrative motifs in the Samson story should be dated after the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.

If any connection may be made with the Heracles traditions, it might be in regard to the sanctuary of Heracles on the Aegean island of Cos. The sanctuary could be used for wedding banquets for the poorer members of the community. The wedding festival would occur during the month that was devoted to the veneration of Heracles (Oakley and Sinos 1991: 22–23). Maybe the idea that wedding festivals could be done under the aegis of Heracles might have been known to our biblical author.

Foxes

Many commentators have noted that the story of how Samson used foxes to burn down the fields of the Philistines parallels Greek legends, especially the tale recounted by Ovid that describes how a young boy accidentally burned down his neighbor's fields with a fox and a firebrand.

Judg 15:4–5 recounts how Samson captured three hundred foxes, paired them, tied a burning torch to each pair of foxes, and chased them through the Philistine fields in order to burn the crop. (When we hear the number three hundred, are we to think of the three hundred Spartans who fought the Persian army at Thermopylae in 480 BCE?) There are problems with this text. Foxes are solitary animals not easily caught (Moore 1895: 341; Soggin 1981: 246; Margalith 1985: 226). With their tails tied together, foxes will not run, but will fight each other believing the other fox to be the source of the pain (Moore 1895: 343; Margalith 1985: 225). (Did someone in our modern era really try this experiment to see whether foxes would burn down fields or fight each other?) Furthermore, foxes are not really found in Palestine (Soggin 1981: 246). The solution to these questions so

often given by commentators is that the foxes are really jackals, since the classical world's fox is not found in Palestine. Many commentators have pointed out that the Hebrew word translated as fox more readily means jackal.[5] The word for jackal also sounds like the word for "burn". A city in the area where Samson lived appears to be named after jackals, *Shaalbon*, perhaps because of their presence there (Margalith 1985: 225–26).

But a question really worth asking is why did Samson burn down the fields of all the Philistines when retribution on merely the criminals who killed the woman of Timnah and her family would have been more appropriate? (Soggin 1981: 248). Perhaps the answer is that this story about foxes/jackals and torches is a folklore narrative that the biblical author wishes to use at this point, and so the murders are simply an excuse to introduce the tale. That would make me think that our biblical author has stolen this bit of folklore from classical sources, since we have nothing comparable in biblical sources. Since this story ill-fits the plotline, it appears to be a deliberate attempt to place an entertaining story into the narrative.

Where does the story come from? Many scholars point to a text in Ovid and customs in Rome. On April 19, at the festival of Ceres, the Romans would let foxes loose in the circus or in fields on harvest day with torches tied to their tails and the citizens would chase them. The custom was explained by Ovid in *Fasti*, IV, 679–710.[6] According to Ovid, a boy tied burning straw to the tail of a female fox who set neighbors' fields on fire (Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 703–708) (Margalith 1985: 224; Guillaume 2004: 174),

> He in a valley at the end of a willow copse caught a vixen fox which had carried off many farmyard fowls. The captive brute he wrapped in straw and hay, and set a light to her; she escaped that hands that would have burned her. Where she fled, she set fire to the crops that clothed the fields, and breeze fanned the devouring flames
>
> (Frazer 1931: 214)

This "event" gave rise to the later Roman celebrations, according to Ovid. This story does bear similarity to the Samson account, except Samson did this deliberately and used three hundred foxes or jackals with their tails tied together. But familiarity with the story in Ovid may have inspired the biblical author.

The Roman story of the foxes tended to merge with the traditions associated with the festival of Robigalia, another festival in April, a festival in which puppies of a rust color were sacrificed to ensure that the crops would not be infected with rust (Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 901–942) (Soggin 1981: 248). Some scholars assume that the biblical account was connected to some Palestinian festival designed to avoid rust fungus in corn caused by the sun on the heavy dew of the Palestinian summer, especially in the Shephelah where the Samson traditions arose (Gray 1967: 265). This would connect the story to something comparable to the Roman customs in Robigalia.

A related tradition recalls how Hannibal sent oxen with burning torches between their horns into the fields prior to the battle of Lake Trasimene (Livy,

XXII.16.6–8; 17.1–7) (Gaster 1969: 435; Soggin 1981: 249). Perhaps both the story of the boy and the foxes as well as Hannibal's actions were known to the author of the Samson narrative. A fox or foxes with fire tied to their tails who then burn down fields is quite a distinctive tale.

Hero bound with cords

Apollodorus tells the story, in *The Library*, II.5.11, of how Heracles was seized by pharaoh's servants in Egypt to be sacrificed, but escaped by breaking his bonds, "So Hercules also was seized and haled to the altars, but he burst his bonds and slew both Bursiris and his son Amphidamas" (Frazer 1921: 1:227). This compares rather well to the account in Judg 15:13–15, wherein Samson is tied with cords by the men of Judah, but when the Philistines arrive to take him prisoner and presumably kill him, he breaks his bonds and kills one thousand of them with the jawbone of an ass. The structure of both accounts is: 1) hero is bound, 2) foreigners come to take him, 3) he is to be killed, 4) he breaks his bonds, and 5) he kills the foreigners. For two short narratives there is much similarity here.

Hero uses an unusual weapon

Apollodorus speaks of how Heracles crafted a special weapon in *The Library*, II.4.11, "for he had himself cut a club at Nemea" (Frazer 1921: 1:183). He sought to use it against the Nemean lion according to *The Library*, II.5.1, "but when he perceived that the beast was invulnerable, he heaved up his club and made after him" (Frazer 1921: 1:187). From Pausanias (*Description of Greece*, II.31.10), we learn out of what substance the club was constructed, "Now this club, which was of wild olive, taking root in the earth … grew up again and is still alive; Heracles, they say, discovering the wild olive by the Saronic Sea, cut a club from it" (Henderson 1918: 1:421). Heracles picks up this olive sapling either at Helicon (Theocritus, *Idyll*, 15:207–210), Nemea (Apollodorus, *The Library*, II.4.11; II.5.1), or Saronic Bay (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, II.31.10) (Margalith 1987: 64–65). In similar fashion Samson used the jawbone of an ass to kill one thousand Philistines according to Judg 15:15–16. Both weapons are rather random objects picked up in the field or woods, but become very special weapons.

Gates and pillars

There may be an oblique connection between Samson's removal of the city gate and the two posts from Gaza in Judg 16:3 and the tradition of how Heracles holds up the pillars at Gibraltar and holds the gates open for the gods in the heavenly realm. The text in Judg 16:3 says that Samson put these objects on his shoulders, and that reminds us of Heracles' efforts. In reference to Gibraltar, Apollodorus tells us in *The Library*, II.5.10, "and proceeding to Tartessus he erected as tokens of his journey two pillars over against each other at the

boundaries of Europe and Libya" (Frazer 1921: 1:211–13). Diodorus Siculus, in *Description of Greece*, III.55.3, says, "when he visited the regions to the west and set his pillars in Libya" (Oldfather 1967: 2:257). The two pillars remind us of the two posts hauled up with the door to the top of the hill by Samson. In both accounts the strength of the hero moves rather large objects to a significant place at some distance.

Sexual strength of the hero

In a previous quote we observed that Heracles had sex with the fifty daughters of Thespius while hunting a lion, according to Apollodorus. In *Description of Greece*, IX.27.6–7, Pausanias makes the same observation,

> Heracles, they say, had intercourse with the fifty daughters of Thestius (sic), except one, in a single night. … Heracles had connections with all the virgin daughters of Thestius in one and the same night, and how they all bore him sons
>
> (Henderson: 4:289)

Notice that Apollodorus had Heracles bed each woman on a separate night, but Pausanias turns Heracles into a sexual superman by having him love them all in one night.

Likewise, Samson is portrayed as quite a man with the ladies. He seeks to marry the Philistine woman from Timnah against his parents' wishes (Judg 14:1–15:6), he has sex with a prostitute in Gaza, but still has the strength in the middle of the night to carry off the city gate and two posts (Judg 16:1–3), and finally his dalliance with Delilah leads to his downfall (Judg 16:4–22). Much of the biblical text is devoted to his sexual desires and activity, and the harlot of Gaza episode may portray him with incredible strength both in bed and afterward. I suspect imagery of Heracles may be the background here.

Strength in hair

Samson's hair growth gives him strength, and when he is shorn, his strength is gone. In Judg 16:17, Samson himself says to Delilah that he is a Nazirite and his uncut hair is the source of his strength, and this refers back to the Angel of God's message that Samson should not cut his hair (Judg 13:5). The Nazirite guidelines, however, do not connect loss of strength with loss of hair (Margalith 1986a: 230–32). Though he claims to be a Nazirite, Samson does not appear to be a Nazirite because he drinks alcohol (Judg 14:10) and he obviously touches the corpses of his slain enemies to obtain their clothing (Judg 14:19). Furthermore, the Nazirite guidelines prohibiting alcohol and abstaining from things unclean are imposed upon his mother during her pregnancy (Judg 13:4), not Samson. Ultimately, the image of a magical man of power is a Greek motif, not biblical and not really connected to a Nazirite vow (Moore 1895: 357; Margalith 1986a: 232).

What is truly significant is that the motif of cutting hair to destroy someone's power is found in several Greek accounts (Gaster 1969: 439; Soggin 1981: 258; Margalith 1986a: 232). Nisus, king of Megara, was besieged by the Cretans, but was invincible until his daughter Scylla cut his hair so that he would be defeated by King Minos, whom Scylla loved. Apollodorus tells the story in *The Library*, III.15.8,

> Now Nisus perished through his daughter's treachery. For he had a purple hair on the middle of his head, and an oracle ran that when it was pulled out he should die; and his daughter Scylla fell in love with Minos and pulled out the hair
>
> (Frazer 1921: 2:117)

Pausanias relates the account differently in *Description of Greece*, I.19.4,

> About Nisus there is a legend. His hair, they say, was red, and it was fated that he should die on its being cut off … the daughter of Nisus, falling in love here with Minos, cut off her father's hair
>
> (Henderson 1918: 1:95) (Cf. Hyginus, *Fabula*, 198; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII.81–95)

Apollodorus tells another story in *The Library*, II.4.7, "but when Comaetho, daughter of Pterelaos, falling in love with Amphitryon, pulled out the golden hair from her father's head, Pterelaos died, and Amphitryon subjugated all the islands" (Frazer 1921: 1:173). Poseiden had given Pterelaos the golden hair, so it was a divine gift.

Although these are not accounts about Heracles, the plotline is remarkably similar to the narratives about Samson and Delilah in Judg 16:4–21. The person has: 1) hair with special power, 2) a deceitful woman cut the hair, 3) the hero lost his power, 4) tragically the woman was close to the hero so as to take advantage of him, and 5) it led to the death of the hero. With the story of Pterelaos we might add the motif of the divine origin of the gift, as was the case with the strength in Samson's hair also (Gaster 1969: 439).

Is there anything comparable in the Heracles traditions? A not so well known tale tells of how Hercules lost his shaggy hair and supernatural power when he spent three days in the belly of a whale in Jaffa (Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 36–37) (Margalith 1986a: 233; Wajdenbaum 2011: 227). The reference to three days in the belly of the whale and the port of Jaffa or Joppa immediately reminds us of the tale of Jonah, another late post-exilic narrative.

The deceitful woman

Delilah's guiles (Judg 26:4–21) led Samson to lose his strength, be captured, blinded, enslaved, and ultimately killed, after a young boy led him to the pillars for which Samson had to grope. Contained within this story line are a number

of motifs which can be observed in the Heracles legends in separate accounts (Margalith 1987: 63–64):

1) The loss of strength and virility occurred for Heracles when he was enslaved by the charms of Omphale, the queen of Lydia, who gave Heracles women's work for three years as a punishment for misdeeds he committed when he was insane (Ovid, *Heroides*, X.47–118).
2) Heracles was, for a time, captured by the servants of pharaoh (Apollodorus, *The Library*, II.5.11).
3) As a result of treachery, Heracles served the weaker Eurystheus and performed his labors (Gray 1967: 183).
4) Heracles lost his sight and groped about in the underworld (Gray 1967: 183).
5) The centaur Nesus deceived Deianerira, the wife of Heracles, who unwittingly gave Heracles clothing to wear with poison in it, which would have caused his death ultimately, so Heracles chose to die on a funeral pyre lit by his son, while his wife committed suicide (Sophocles, *The Women of Trachis*, 1122–1178).
6) As the young boy facilitated Samson's death by leading him to the pillars of the temple, so Heracles' son facilitated his death (Sophocles, *The Women of Trachis*, 1023–1278).

Conclusion

After reviewing these common themes and details that the Samson narratives share with the Heracles legends and Greek customs, what might we conclude? Although there are no clear texts that we may form-critically compare for similarities, there are numerous examples in the Samson narratives that appear to reflect Greek influence. One might respond that many of these similarities are commonly found in folklore throughout the world. That is true. But I would observe the great number of commonalities shared by the Heracles traditions and the stories of Samson. The Samson narratives are only four short chapters in length, and yet we have compiled a tremendous number of shared themes. I am compelled to believe that the biblical author was familiar with Heracles legends.

Can we date them? The classical and Hellenistic authors who provide us with interesting parallels connecting Samson and Heracles all date from the fifth century BCE to the second century CE. By itself that may imply that the Heracles traditions, which the biblical author might have known, emerged after the sixth century BCE. However, there are not too many Greek authors prior to that time for us to consider other than Homer and Hesiod, so we must be cautious in our conclusions. Since Homer and Hesiod do not attest any of the Heracles traditions that are useful for comparison with the Samson stories, that may imply that the biblical author of the Samson legends drew upon Greek traditions in the post-exilic era.

An interesting observation is that post-exilic biblical literature often creates short narrative accounts of individuals who distinguish themselves by their faith in God, or their heroic deeds, or sometimes simply their unusual actions. Such

individuals would include Ruth, Jonah, Esther, Daniel (in Daniel 1–6), Tobit, Judith, and Joseph (if you consider Genesis 37, 39–50 to be a post-exilic addition to Genesis, as I do). Samson, too, is a heroic individual figure, who fights for God's people, and he has a rather dark persona, as does the unwilling prophet, Jonah. The legends about Samson are not really similar to those about the other judges in the book of Judges, who lead Israelites in battle. Rather the legends focus only on his individual activities. To me, this appears to be a trait more typical of post-exilic novels in the biblical literature.

Another speculative suggestion would be the development of Samson's devotion to God. With his birth narrative one expects Samson to be a warrior truly devoted to God, but once the narrative begins in Judges 14, the reader or listener suspects that Samson is not truly a religious warrior in the same vein as the great judges. Yet the portrayal of his death shows him turning to God for help in one last battle against the Philistines. Could this in any way speak to post-exilic Jews in exile, who are born Jewish but stray from their ancestral ways, only to come back to the faithful fold of Jewish believers late in life. Perhaps the stories might be viewed in this light.

There is one haunting detail that may or may not be significant. The reference to the thirty companions of Samson at the wedding feast (Judg 14:11) may reflect the late fourth century BCE attempts in Athens to limit wedding banquets to thirty people. Granted, thirty is a rather generic number and it is used frequently in various literatures. However, it is an intriguing coincidence. If there is a connection, this would place the emergence of the Samson stories in the Hellenistic era.

The weight of the literary testimony with so many parallels between Samson and the Greek legends seems to point strongly to the possibility that the biblical author knew the Greek legends. I would then conclude that the Samson narratives are inserted by a late redaction into the Deuteronomistic History and show evidence of being yet another text possibly influenced by Greek culture. (I have previously suggested this to be the case with Judg 21:15–24 and 2 Sam 23:13–17.) I believe that the Deuteronomistic History may be a document that arose sometime between the seventh and the fifth centuries BCE, but the Samson narratives and some other accounts may have been placed into the text in the late fourth or third centuries BCE.

Notes

1 This essay first appeared as "Samson and Heracles Revisited," *SJOT* 32 (2018): 1–19.
2 Moore (1895: 364); Gray (1967: 183); Gaster (1969: 439); Crenshaw (1978: 17); Margalith (1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1987); Spronk (2010: 24; 2014: 112); Edelman (2015: 235).
3 Sophocles, *The Women of Trachis*, 900–1278; Apollodorus, *The Library*, II. 7.7; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX. 269–272; Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, IV. 38–39; Lucian, *Hermotimus*, 7; Hyginus, *Fabula*, 36.
4 Margalith (1986a: 228); Yadin (2002: 421); Wajdenbaum (2011: 225); cf. Richter (1991: 52–71), especially p. 63, for a different view.
5 Moore (1895: 341); Driver (1963: 652–53); Gray (1967: 265); Boling (1975: 234); Martin (1975: 169); Margalith (1985: 225); Butler (2009: 340).

6 Gray (1967: 265); Gaster (1969: 435); Crenshaw (1978: 87); Soggin (1981: 248); Margalith (1985: 224); Guillaume (2004: 174).

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10 The sacrificed maiden

Iphigenia and Jephthah's daughter[1]

The tragic account of Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter in Judg 11:30–40 has elicited manifold responses of commentators over the years. Among the many issues discussed is the emphasis upon the folly of Jephthah's vow and the tragedy that befell the young girl, who sadly remains nameless. Most contemporary scholars assume that she died, not that she became a perpetual virgin somewhere. Jephthah calls the sacrifice a "burnt offering" in Judg 11:30, which is a strong indication that she died (Robinson 2004), though some still believe she was a dedicated virgin (Weinfeld 1972; Marcus 1986: 7–55; Landers 1991; Reis 2002: 105–30). Alexandra and Dirk Rottzoll (2003) survey contemporary scholarship, noting the recent trend among scholars that assumes she was killed, after many years in which scholars decided she was a dedicated virgin. Josephus and other ancient Jewish sources, as well as patristic sources assume she was killed (Houtman 2003). George Foote Moore details the many patristic, medieval, and early modern scholars who likewise declare she was killed (Moore 1895: 304).

The ancient Israelites appear to have accepted the sacrifice of children in their popular piety (J. Day 1989; Levenson 1993: 3–52; Steinberg 1999; Logan 2009: 668–73; Bauks 2010: 23–57). The narrative in 2 Kgs 3:27 even views Mesha's sacrifice of his son as effective against the Israelites. Nor does our narrative pass negative judgment on the sacrifice of the girl; rather, it seems to treat it as though it was necessary for the fulfillment of the vow (Soggin 1981: 215). Elsewhere, the biblical text often condemns the practice (Deut 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10). So we have a tension between the various parts of the biblical text.

Commentators have tried to understand how the biblical author wishes us to understand what Jephthah must have been thinking when he made his vow. Did Jephthah think that an animal was going to walk out of the first floor of his home (i.e., a goat or a cow) (Boling 1996: 208)? Did he think that a servant would walk out (Marcus 1986: 13–27; Steinberg 1999: 125)? Did he really intend to sacrifice a family member? Was he totally egocentric (Assis 2005: 234–37; Bellis 2007: 116; Frolov 2013: 217)? Or was he simply not thinking clearly at all when he uttered a rash vow (Weems 1988: 55–56; Neff 1999; Robinson 2004; Marcus 1986: 54–55)? Is his rash vow like that of Saul's in 1 Sam 14:24–46, which almost foolishly killed Jonathan (Gross 2009: 604)? I believe we may be unnecessarily trying to psychologize the biblical text. I believe our biblical author has been inspired to craft

this narrative by his knowledge of Greek legends and especially the fifth century BCE plays of Euripides. The biblical author wished to create a tragic tale in the Greek literary style. I suggest that the thought processes of Jephthah are really not a concern for the biblical author. Critical scholars have suggested that Jephthah's daughter may be compared to Greek myths about Iphigenia, Kore-Persephone, and the daughters of Erechtheus (P. Day 1989; Beavis 2004; Park 2015). In addition, the author may be trying to historicize a mythic ritual practiced by some Israelites that involved young girls mourning for four days, perhaps for a fertility deity who was envisioned to be in the underworld. In the Greek world such mourning was done for Persephone, Demeter, and Kore. The two-month period perhaps would refer to the summer period of time in the Palestinian agricultural year when the land was dry (Gray 1967: 255–56; Gaster 1969: 2:431–32; Soggin 1981: 216–18).

Thomas Römer points out the interesting similarities between Judg 11:30–40 and Genesis 22, the sacrifice of Isaac. In both accounts the sacrifice is to be a burnt offering (Gen 22:2; Judg 11:30), the victim is an only child (Gen 22:2; Judg 11:34), and the child is addressed by the father as "my son" (Gen 22:2) or "my daughter" (Judg 11:35). The difference, of course, is that God does not intervene to save Jephthah's daughter. For Römer the author of Judg 11:30–32, 34–40 has transformed the "happy" ending of Genesis 22 into a tragic account. He believes that the Deuteronomistic Historian would not have included an account of human sacrifice, but rather this material is a post-exilic, post-Deuteronomistic insertion into the biblical text. It is contemporary with the book of Koheleth and shares Koheleth's pessimism, and thus is a negative critique upon the theology of the Deuteronomistic Historians. (Koh 5:3–4 warns against faithless vows.) It is a tragic reinterpretation of Genesis 22, and it reflects a sense of tragedy that is found in Greek literature and plays (Römer, 1998: 30–33, 37–38; 2000: 30–31). Yael Shemesh compares Judges 11 and Genesis 22 in this regard (2012). Other authors have also sensed the tragic dimension; neither God nor people intervene to save this girl from human sacrifice as was the case with Isaac (Genesis 22) and Jonathan (1 Samuel 14) (Exum 1992: 57–58).

Römer senses a special connection between the biblical account and the plays of Euripides on several points, especially *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (412 BCE) and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (405 BCE). Iphigenia provides the archetype for Jephthah's daughter. Thus, ambiguity as to whether Jephthah's daughter dies reflects the fact that in the plays of Euripides, Iphigenia does not die but is taken by Artemis to Tauris. Other similarities exist: the fathers are both military leaders, both feel sorry for themselves, both blame the daughter, the maiden is noble enough to accept her fate voluntarily, she encourages her father to go through with the sacrifice, and her sacrifice is recalled by other maidens. Thus, for Römer the story is a Hellenistic insertion into the biblical text after 300 BCE due to its inspiration by the plays of Euripides, literature with which the Jews in Alexandria may have been familiar after that city was founded (Römer 1998: 34–36).

Behind the tale of Iphigenia that is fictionalized by Euripides may be ritual activity at festivals that took place in Brauron and later at Athens. Iphigenia was originally a name of Artemis Tauropolis in whose honor a human sacrifice was

undertaken in dramatic fashion. In Phoenicia, the sacrifice of a stag replaced a young maiden in honor of the Brauronian Artemis according to the Roman historian Pausanias. The reason for these sacrifices is forever lost to us (Moore 2013: 305). It is possible that the biblical account which alludes to the mourning of young women for the death of Jephthah's daughter may be somehow related to the cult of this goddess. Or it may be simple borrowing from the plays of Euripides (Römer 1998: 36).

Römer is not alone in his views that connect Jephthah's daughter to the Euripidean plays. Others suggest that the biblical author drew motifs from the two Euripidean plays, as well as the play, Hippolytus (Kunz-Lübke 2007; Wajdenbaum 2011: 221). Klaus Spronk lists a number of Hellenistic parallels with accounts in the book of Judges overall, and in reference to Jephthah's sacrifice, he sees the connection between Euripides' portrayal of Iphigenia and Jephthah's daughter. In both there is a military crisis requiring the sacrifice, the ambivalence of the father in proceeding with the sacrifice, the bravery of the daughter in accepting her fate and encouraging the vow to be kept, and the indication that the girl will not be forgotten (Spronk 2010: 26).

The view that this is a Hellenistic insertion into the greater narrative of Jephthah and his wars has been criticized by several scholars. Some have maintained that our present biblical text is an essential unity (Logan 2009: 667; Frolov 2013: 212–13; Sjöberg 2006: 28). Though Sjöberg does admit that the story is made of "two-story" lines only loosely held together, the sacrifice of the daughter being one and the more emphasized of the two narratives, and the military action being the other (Sjöberg 2006: 70 *et passim*). Alice Logan sees an essential unity because of the significance of human sacrifice for military victory, as pre-exilic Israelites would have assumed on a popular level, but she admits that the sacrifice fits uncomfortably with the Deuteronomist's theology, who nevertheless "became persuaded to leave the story unaltered" (Logan 2009: 685). To say that makes me suspicious. I would prefer to see the story as post-Deuteronomistic. If the story is post-Deuteronomistic and a late insertion into our text, perhaps that might explain why nowhere in the rest of the biblical text do we find any allusion to the festival celebrated by the young maidens in honor of Jephthah's daughter, for it may be an allusion to such rituals elsewhere in the Greek or Hellenistic world.

That the account of the vow and sacrifice in Judg 11:30–31(32), 34–40 is an insertion into the Jephthah narrative may be indicated by the reference to Jephthah and the men of Ephraim in Judg 12:1. There it is implied that Jephthah is still on the battlefield with his army intact when the men of Ephraim arrive. If so, then in the original narrative there was no opportunity for Jephthah to return home. Furthermore, Judg 11:40 might imply that Jephthah spent two months at home until his daughter returned from the hills before he returned to the battle, and Judg 12:1 shows no awareness of that. If one counters by saying that the narrative in Judg 11:34–40 did indeed occur after the battle with the Ephraimites, why was the text not placed there? It is an insertion, and it is placed in our present location to be proximate to the actual vow made during the attack on Ammon (Judg 11:30–31), and the dislocation of the narrative concerning the battle with Ephraim is simply

of little concern to the later editor (cf. Römer 1998: 28–29). Römer views the narrative concerning both the vow and the sacrifice not as an independent story, but as something written into the narrative later (28–29). Thus, Römer observes that Jephthah can be praised by Samuel in 1 Sam 12:11 in a Deuteronomistic speech, which otherwise would be unusual were Jephthah to have been guilty of child sacrifice (30–31). To me this view is commendable.

Some scholars believe that the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter and the story of Iphigenia both go back to common folklore archetypes (P. Day 1989: 60–66). Dolores Kamrada, in particular, in her excellent work, points out the differences between the two narratives: Iphigenia is sacrificed away from her home and before the war, whereas Jephthah's daughter is sacrificed near her home and after the victory in war (Kamrada 2016: 3–4). I would maintain these differences are trivial compared to all the similarities that I will point out. Kamrada sees greater similarity with the Roman story of Horatius who comes home from battle and kills his sister Horatia—thus the death of a woman after battle theme (Kamrada 2016: 4). Again, I would say this story lacks so many of the similarities that Jephthah's daughter shares with Iphigenia. As an aside, I find it ironic that Händel's oratorio, *Jephtha*, appears to portray Jephthah's daughter in a fashion most similar to Iphigenia in the plays of Aeschylus (Sjöberg 2006: 136–37).

Analysis of the narratives

In this essay I will compare the story line of the biblical narrative with excerpts from the plays of Euripides. I will include some observations about other Greek plays and legends, for I believe that the biblical author may have been, primarily but not exclusively, indebted to Euripides for the plotline of the biblical account. I will lay out the biblical narrative, breaking it down into the significant points worthy of comparison, and then I will provide what I believe are the comparable themes and narratives from the Greek sources. Our biblical narrative is terse by comparison to the Greek sources, so that often one sentence or line of biblical narrative performs the function of presenting several worthwhile points of comparison. The following comparisons are worthy of note:

Warrior makes a vow in order to win military victory

Judg 11:30–31: "And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, 'If you will give the Ammonites into my hand'".

In *Iphigenia at Aulis* (lines 87–94) by Euripides, the seer Calchas comes to Agamemnon and informs him that he must sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia in order for the sea winds to return and bring the Greek fleet across the Aegean Sea to Troy (Kovacs 2002: 175). In the Euripidean play, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, lines 15–16, Iphigenia recalls, "But sailing was bad and he did not get the right winds" (Kovacs 1999: 154).

The vow is uttered prior to engaging in conflict in both narratives. In battle or war where many human lives are lost, the ancients may have perceived that the

sacrifice of at least one human life to the god or gods may be necessary to win their active involvement in the strife. Lauren Monroe observes that the sacrifice of a human female's life appears to be the appropriate or most acceptable offering in conflict or military scenarios (Monroe 2013).

Military setting

Judg 11:32: "So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the Lord gave them into his hand".

In the Greek plays the Greek navy is able to sail with favorable winds once the sacrifice has been undertaken. The sacrifice of Iphigenia was necessary so that the Trojan War could begin. The Greeks win. As just noted, the sacrifice of females may be an appropriate ritual in the face of a military crisis.

Vow to sacrifice the first person who comes out of the house

Judg 11:30–31:

> And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's, to be offered up by me as a burnt offering".

In *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, lines 20–21, by Euripides, we hear that the king vows to sacrifice someone or something special, "You vowed to the light-bearing goddess that you would sacrifice the fairest thing the year brought forth" (Kovacs 1999: 154). This something special turns out to be a child, as it was for Jephthah.

The plotline in the plays by Euripides does not involve someone coming out of a home. The best parallels to this aspect of the biblical narrative come not from the plays of Euripides but from other Greek legends and tales. According to Servius (400 CE), a commentator on Virgil's *Aeneid*, during a violent storm at sea, Idomeneus of Crete, who was returning home from the Trojan War, promised Poseidon that he would sacrifice the first thing he met when landed. It was his son (Römer 1998: 33; Marcus 1986: 16–17; Gross 2009: 601). General Meander vowed during battle to sacrifice the first people he greeted after winning the victory. It was his son Archelos, his mother, and his sister, who came out of his home to greet him. After sacrificing them he drowned himself in the river that bears his name (Gaster 1969: 2:430; Marcus 1986: 17, 41; Gross 2009: 601). Thus, the theme of sacrificing a beloved one due to a battle vow is a theme found in Greek legends (Spronk 2010: 26).

Child comes out of the house

Judg 11:34: "Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing. She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her".

Again, the best parallels come from other Greek legends and tales, as mentioned previously. Idomeneus of Crete had to sacrifice his son; Meander had to sacrifice his son and other family members.

Victim is a family member

Judg 11:34: "and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing. She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her".

Jephthah was surprised; perhaps that it was his child. Agamemnon, too, did not expect the sacrifice to be one of his children. Again, in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, lines 20–21, by Euripides, we hear about the king's vow to sacrifice something special, "You vowed to the light-bearing goddess that you would sacrifice the fairest thing the year brought forth" (Kovacs 1999: 154). This something special for both men was a child.

Victim is a girl

Judg 11:34: "She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her".

Iphigenia is Agamemnon's daughter. There are brothers, however, including Theseus, who will be important in Euripides' plays. But the parallel between Jephthah and Agamemnon is significant; the special sacrifice turns out to be a daughter. In other Greek legends the child is a son, which makes the connection between the biblical narrative and Euripides more significant.

As observed earlier, it appears that the sacrifice of a human female's life appears to be the appropriate or most acceptable offering in military conflict or crisis scenarios. The theme of a willing female who sacrifices herself for the good of the community appears often in Greek literature (Monroe 2013).

Father expresses ambivalence or regret over vow

Judg 11:35: "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low; you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow".

After initially sending a letter to his wife, Clytaemestra, telling her to bring Iphigenia to the camp, he writes another letter telling her not to bring Iphigenia (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 115–120) (Kovacs 2002: 177). When Menelaus discovers this latter letter and confronts Agamemnon, Agamemnon speaks to Menelaus and says, "But I will not kill my children" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, line 397)(cf. Kovacs 2002: 207). Menelaus and Agamemnon for a time plan to send Iphigenia home and kill the prophet Calchas to keep the oracle a secret (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 473–542)(Kovacs 2002: 213–21). Agamemnon continues to lament the sad task of sacrificing Iphigenia throughout most of the plot.

Agamemnon speaks to Iphigenia at some point prior to the sacrificial ritual and he declares, "It is a terrible thing to steel myself to this deed, but a terrible thing

likewise not to" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1257–1259) (Kovacs 2002: 301).

Agamemnon feels remorse once he sees the arrival of his daughter for the sacrificial ritual. In Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1547–1550, we read, "When king Agamemnon saw the girl entering the grove to be sacrificed, he groaned aloud, and bending his head backward he wept, holding his garment before his face" (Kovacs 2002: 335). Euripides portrays Agamemnon with more passion than does our biblical author with Jephthah.

In his play about Agamemnon, Aeschylus portrays the king as distraught over the impending sacrifice of his daughter. We read,

> Then the elder king spoke and said, "Hard is my fate to refuse obedience, and hard, if I must slay my child, the glory of my home, and at the altar-side stain with streams of a virgin's blood a father's hand. … How can I become a deserter to my fleet and fail my allies in arms"?
>
> (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, lines 205–214)
> (Smith 1936: 2:21)

Father feels self-pity

Judg 11:35: "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low; you have become the cause of great trouble to me".

Jephthah immediately speaks of how the impending sacrifice of his daughter brings him great trouble, and we can view this as a degree of self-pity. It seems as if his immediate concern was his own mental state rather than her impending death. He may mourn because his family line will end with her death (Marcus 1986: 28–32).

One might sense with the dramatic Euripidean portrayal of Agamemnon's emotions that the Greek king probably felt self-pity, as well as remorse, over his decision to kill his daughter. This may be implied in his words spoken to Iphigenia,

> It is a terrible thing to steel myself to this deed, but a terrible thing likewise not to. For my fate will be the same. … The Greeks will kill my girls in Argos and the two of you and me if I make void the goddess' oracle
>
> (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1257–1259,
> 1266–1269)(Kovacs 2002: 301)

When he refers to his determined fate being the same whether he kills Iphigenia or not, because the Greeks will kill his entire family, that sounds like a statement of self-pity.

Again, Euripides portrays Agamemnon thus just before the sacrifice, "he groaned aloud, and bending his head backward he wept, holding his garment before his face" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1548–1550)(Kovacs 2002:

335). There is more emotional and personal passion here than in the portrayal of Agamemnon by Aeschylus, and this anguish may betoken a degree of self-pity.

Father blames daughter

Judg 11:35: "You have brought me very low; you have become the cause of great trouble to me."

Commentators often sense that Jephthah is angry with his daughter and thus blaming her (Tapp 1989: 166; Exum 1992: 52).

The plays of Euripides do not portray Agamemnon as trying to cast responsibility for the pain upon the daughter. Commentators often say that, but I have not been able to find those lines in the play.

Daughter runs or comes to the father

Judg 11:34: "and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing".

When Iphigenia first arrives at Aulis, she runs to greet her father, for she believes that she is going to be married to Achilles. She says,

> Oh mother, I shall run ahead of you—do not be angry with me—and press my breast against the breast of my father! … I want to run and fling myself at your breast, father, after so long a time. I greatly desire to see your face. Do not be angry.
>
> (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 633, 635–637)
> (Kovacs 2002: 229)

Before the sacrifice Iphigenia clearly says that she has come to Agamemnon willingly, "Father, I have come to you" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, line 1552) (Kovacs 2002: 335).

Daughter begins by addressing father in the vocative

Judg 11:36: "She said to him, 'My father'".

In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, line 1552, Iphigenia begins by addressing her father in the vocative, "Father, I have come" (Kovacs 2002: 335).

Daughter encourages father to keep the oath

Judg 11:36:

> She said to him, "My father, if you have opened your mouth to the Lord, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites".

Iphigenia stresses her willingness to abide by the oracle of the goddess, "Father, I have come to you. I willingly grant that your men may bring me to the goddess' altar and sacrifice me, if that is what the oracle requires" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1552–1556)(Kovacs 2002: 335–37). The emphasis here is upon her statement, "if that is what the oracle requires". The oracle of Calchas functions like Jephthah's vow in this regard.

Daughter explicitly accepts death

Judg 11:37: "do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth".

The later Jewish tradition accented the daughter's acceptance of her death, for in *Pseudo-Philo* the daughter, who is named Seila, appears more noble in fulfilling her destiny to die as a sacrifice than her father, who is reluctant for her to die.

Iphigenia accepts the decision of the goddess Artemis, when she says, "If Artemis has decided to take my body, shall I, who am mortal, oppose a goddess? That is impossible: I shall give myself to Greece" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1395–1397)(Kovacs 2002: 319). Iphigenia expressly states that the goddess may have her body. She does not realize that ironically Artemis will take her alive and not dead in Euripides' portrayal of the events.

Daughter explicitly says "do it to me"

Judg 11:37: "do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth".

Iphigenia basically says bring me to the altar for sacrifice when she states, "I willingly grant that your men may bring me to the goddess' altar and sacrifice me, … In view of this, let no Greek take hold of me: I will bravely submit my neck to the knife" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1552–1556, 1159–1560) (Kovacs 2002: 335–37).

Daughter refers to the military conflict

Judg 11:37: "now that the Lord has given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites".

Iphigenia says, "As far as depends on me may you all have good fortune, win victory in war, and return to your native land!" (Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1557–1558) (Kovacs 2002: 337).

Daughter has request

Judg 11:37: "And she said to her father, 'let this thing be done for me: Grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, my companions and I'".

It might be noted that the virgin goddess Artemis lived in the hills, and perhaps from the perspective of the classical Greek tradition, it might be natural for a virgin girl to desire to be there (Marcus 1986: 30; Bonnechere 1994: 149–50). This might indicate Greek influence in our narrative.

Iphigenia has no special request other than the dramatic affirmation that she is willing to be sacrificed, which almost has the feeling of a request.

Father sacrifices her

Judg 11:39: "At the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow he had made".

The description of the execution of Iphigenia is described by Euripides in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1561–1562, in great detail, and the dramatic replacement of Iphigenia by a doe caused by Artemis at the last second before her immolation is described in lines 1584–1601. No one sees this actual replacement, which of course, sets up the plotline for Euripides' play, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, even though that play was written first. The replacement of the sacrificial child by an animal reminds us strikingly of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22. In *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, lines 26–29, Iphigenia herself describes the sacrificial experience, "But when I reached Aulis, they held me aloft in my misery over the sacrificial hearth and put me to the sword. Yet Artemis stole me away, giving the Greeks a deer in my place" (Kovacs 1999: 154).

Daughter is the hero

Though the biblical text does not say this directly, the portrayal of the daughter makes her appear more heroic than her father.

Euripides, in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, lines 1561–1562, describes the response of the crowd present upon hearing Iphigenia's words, "Those were her words, and everyone heard and felt amazement at the bravery and goodness of the maiden" (Kovacs 2002: 337).

Daughter loses the hope for marriage

Judg 11:37: "Grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, my companions and I".

The reference to bewailing her virginity is generally understood by commentators to mean that Jephthah's daughter will never marry. This is obviously true whether she is killed or stays a perpetual virgin devoted to the deity.

In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Iphigenia and her mother Clytaemestra come to Aulis under the deception that Iphigenia is to be married to Achilles. Obviously that does not happen. The reverse happens; Iphigenia will die without benefit of marriage or children. This interesting parallel between the biblical text and the Greek play is very distinctive.

Daughter is mourned

Judg 11:37: "Grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains, and bewail my virginity, my companions and I".

and

Judg 11,39–40: "So there arose an Israelite custom that for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite".

Presumably, the crowd in *Iphigenia at Aulis* mourned the loss of such a brave young girl after they heard her speech.

The daughter's memory is kept alive

Judg 11:39–40: "So there arose an Israelite custom that for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite".

One could say that the memory of Iphigenia is kept alive, since ultimately Agamemnon will be killed by his wife, Clytaemestra, for the murder of their daughter.

Ritual is connected to her memory

Judg 11:39–40: "So there arose an Israelite custom that for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite".

There is no real parallel in the Greek legends to this motif.

Conclusion

I have broken down the story of Jephthah and his daughter into twenty-two component parts and observed that there are very close parallels with Euripides' plays and other Greek legends on most of these points. Analyzing twenty-two points of comparison may appear somewhat over-detailed (and even obsessive) to the reader. But I make the comparison in this fashion to clearly highlight all the potential points of comparison, so that the reader may sense the deep similarities between the accounts. To be sure, there are differences. In the Jephthah narrative, the girl comes out of a house; that is not the case with Iphigenia (although it is with other Greek legends), so that point of similarity does not exist. Iphigenia does not make a request to her father, as does Jephthah's daughter, to do something before she dies. Iphigenia is sacrificed or appears to be sacrificed immediately. There is no ceremony to commemorate Iphigenia. Obviously, they are different stories, not classic doublets. But I hope that this study has demonstrated the high degree of probability that the author of the biblical narrative was familiar with the Greek plays of Euripides and some other Greek literature. The purpose of the biblical author perhaps was to present a tragic narrative in which God does not rescue the child, as was the case with Isaac, but rather allows the tragedy to stand as it does as a testimony to the folly of a dramatic human vow and the general pain of human existence. Since the narrative was inserted into the biblical at a later time than the rest of the book of Judges, it may reflect religious and social issues of the

age in which it was generated. But since we know little or nothing about that age, it becomes difficult to speculate what the intended author's meaning was.

As just noted, the narrative about Jephthah and his daughter may be a late insertion into our present book of Judges, or the entire Jephthah narrative may be secondary. The portrayal of Jephthah is otherwise positive except for this horrid narrative of human sacrifice, implying the secondary nature of this story within the Jephthah traditions (Römer 1998: 31–32; Monroe 2013: 37–38, 51, suggest the Persian period). The story of the sacrifice interrupts the accounts of Jephthah's battlefield exploits with the Ammonites and the Ephraimites and thus appears secondary (Judg 11:12–33; 12:1–6). Or perhaps the Jephthah traditions, as a whole, are secondary in the book of Judges. One becomes suspicious because the story about Jephthah stands between the stories of the minor judges, rather than being placed directly after the accounts of the other major judges. References to Tola and Jair (Judg 10:1–5) come before the Jephthah narrative, and references to Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon follow it (Judg 12:8–15). Thus, I feel on more solid ground suggesting that the story of Jephthah and his daughter, at least, has been placed into the Deuteronomistic History at a later date and may reflect the influence of Greek culture and literature upon the minds of the biblical authors, and its contrast with the Deuteronomistic condemnation of human and child sacrifice is simply overlooked.

This analysis implies that the story of Jephthah's sacrifice was inserted into the book of Judges after 400 BCE in the late Persian period or maybe as late as the early Hellenistic period. This study may reinforce the opinion of some that the Deuteronomistic History is a late literary creation (Lemche 1993; 2001; Bolin 1996; Thompson 1999a; 1999b; Guillaume 2004). Some authors, in particular, see significant parallels between the Deuteronomistic History and Herodotus, so as to date the biblical history after 400 BCE (Nielsen 1997; Wesselius 1999; 2002, who gives many examples).

I am still tempted to believe that the Deuteronomistic History is a seventh and sixth century BCE creation, but that materials could be added into the text as late as the Persian and Hellenistic eras. I have suggested this with other narratives in the past, including Judg 21:19–23 and 2 Sam 23:13–17, both of which I believe reflect great familiarity with Greek and Hellenistic narratives (Gnuse 1998; 2007; 2010). I suggest that the narrative of Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter is one of those late Greek-inspired insertions into the Deuteronomistic History.

Note

1 This essay was first published as "The Sacrificed Maiden: Iphigenia and Jephthah's Daughter" (a revision of "Jephthah's Daughter and Iphigenia in the Plays of Euripides"), *International Journal of the Arts and Humanities* 5 (1) (2019): 16–23.

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11 The maximalist/minimalist debate over historical memory in the primary history of the Old Testament

In recent years there has been a heated debate between biblical scholars over the date for the origin of the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History, which together are called the Primary History. For the past two generations most textbooks have dated the origin of the Deuteronomistic History to the late seventh and sixth centuries BCE, the Yahwist is dated to the sixth century BCE, and the Priestly traditions are located in the fifth or even fourth centuries BCE (the Elohist has been viewed as merely part of the Yahwist tradition). But since the 1980s, critical scholars in Europe, especially in Copenhagen, have suggested that the origin of the entire Primary History in its final form is to be dated to the Hellenistic era, either to the third or the second centuries BCE (the latter date implies Maccabean sponsorship of the texts).

The question of the late origin of the biblical text in the Hellenistic era also raises issues about the value of the historical memory found within those narratives. A late date implies that the Primary History may be mostly fiction and that the events described therein did not happen. The stories are theology, not history, and they seek to create an identity for the Jews in the Hellenistic era by creating a past that never existed. Defenders of a Babylonian Exilic date and Persian date for the origin of the Primary History are inclined to believe there are credible historical memories in the narratives at least for the United Kingdom of Saul, David, and Solomon, and especially for the events of the Divided Monarchies described in the book of Kings. I suspect that most scholars would admit that the Patriarchal Narratives, the Exodus and Wilderness accounts, and especially the conquest accounts in Joshua and Judges, are highly fictionalized. But the battle lines appear to have been drawn around the issue of the historicity of David and events after that. The debate concerning the historicity of events concerning the monarchy seems to go "hand in hand" with the debate over the Hellenistic origins of the biblical text.

A bitter debate essentially has pitted European scholars against American scholars in the past generation. The anger in this debate has spilled over into various aspects of scholarly endeavor in Old Testament circles. In America an article submitted to a prestigious biblical journal will sometimes have reviewer responses of the following ilk: "This submission reflects the thought of the Copenhagen School; only a few crazy people in Denmark and England buy into

those arguments". Or again, "This article represents the minimalist position, a school of thought that works without data". These are comments I have received on my own submissions. (As an associate editor for the *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, by contrast, I always try to be respectful to authors of submissions, for they have poured their hearts and significant time into their crafted essays.)

American scholars will call European scholars "nihilists", and the Europeans will return with the charge that Americans are biblical "fundamentalists". The rhetoric has seen people "straw-case" the arguments of their colleagues, perceived to be opponents, into extreme positions. I personally think that the viewpoints of the two schools of thought can be reconciled to a great degree, so I suppose everyone considers me crazy.

History of the discussion

Perhaps the first critical response declaring the biblical text could not be used to craft an authentic history came from Giovanni Garbini, *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* (Garbini 1988). He questioned the historical veracity of much of the biblical text down to the time of (and including) Ezra.

The serious debate may have begun with the publication of Philip Davies' work, *In Search of "Ancient Israel"* (Davies 1992). Herein he declared that there were three Israels: 1) "biblical Israel", the story told in straightforward fashion by the biblical text, 2) "ancient Israel", the reconstruction of biblical scholars who seek to relate a logical, historical history derived from the biblical text, and 3) "historical Israel", the actual history of Palestine, which cannot be recovered since the biblical texts emerge in the Persian and Hellenistic eras too late to be of value in this quest.

Thomas Thompson undertook to write a history of Israel divorced from dependency on the biblical text in 1992. Entitled *Early History of the Israelite People From the Written and Archaeological Sources*, it generally disparaged the use of the biblical text as a source for history, made some reference to archaeological work, and concluded that essentially not much could be said about the history of an Israel (Thompson 1992). It was a serious attempt to write a history of Palestine without depending upon the biblical text. He maintained that there was no distinction between Canaanites and Israelites, that there essentially was no united monarchy as portrayed by the biblical text, Judah and Israel were separate regional polities, and Jerusalem did not become significant as a center until the late seventh century BCE, often being inferior to southern cities such as Lachish and Hebron. Biblical historiography crafted in the Persian period created an image of a pre-exilic Israel to justify the existence of a Jewish identity of returning exiles, most of whom actually were unrelated to the pre-exilic Israelites. Monotheism arose in the Persian period in an age when monotheistic ideas circulated among Persians and other peoples, and it served to help create the self-identity of this new Jewish people. He spent much energy discussing the nature of historiography to conclude that the history writing evidenced in the biblical text has the appearance of being of Persian and especially

Hellenistic origin. This bold volume received acerbic criticism over the next few years from maximalists.

The next year Niels Peter Lemche wrote a seminal essay, "The Old Testament—a Hellenistic Book?", in which he declared that all the texts in the Hebrew Bible were authored in the third to second centuries BCE (Lemche 1993). The texts were a free, literary creation. Of course, that discussion dovetailed completely with the debate concerning the historical veracity of the texts.

In 1995 the *Journal of Biblical Literature* published articles from the proponents of the maximalist and minimalist persuasions in head-to-head confrontation. Iain Provan criticized Ahlström, Davies, Lemche, and Thompson for dismissing the biblical literature as useful for historiography because it is ideological, and declaring that all literature and historiography is ideological (Provan 1995). Why then do they criticize maximalists for being ideological in using this literature for historical reconstruction, said Provan, since all writings are ideological? Why do they, in turn, assume that their own writings are not ideological? Thomas Thompson, in response, accused Provan of not reading the writings of the minimalists and misquoting them dramatically with the use of ellipses (Thompson 1995). Provan does not understand their arguments nor does he appreciate real historiography, said Thompson. Philip Davies likewise accused Provan of failing to understand the arguments of the minimalists and the nature of history and historiography (Davies 1995). Thus, the debate was carried on in acerbic abstract categories of thought with little reference to biblical texts.

At a later point in time, Lester Grabbe responded critically to Provan: 1) Provan speaks of historiographical issues as if his opponents are unaware of them, 2) he distorts the positions of those he critiques, 3) he denies that true objectivity can exist in history writing, 4) thus any subjective opinion is as good as another, and 5) he regards the biblical text as unproblematic (Grabbe 1997a: 29).

In 1996 the extremely provocative work, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*, was put forth by Keith Whitelam, who declared that the biblical histories produced in the textbooks were fictions generated by American and Israeli archaeologists and biblical scholars to legitimate the hold that modern Israelis have on the land of Palestine by inventing a history of ancient Israel (Whitelam 1996). Their use of archaeology to buttress the biblical narrative was tendentious and deceptive. His thesis set off a tremendous firestorm that authors are still addressing. Ilan Pappe, concurring with Whitelam, provides a recent discussion of this horrible use of the Bible over the years (Pappe 2016).

Volkmar Fritz and Philip Davies edited a volume of essays in 1996 entitled *The Origins of the Ancient Israelite State* which generally lowered the dates for the archaeological strata in Palestine, thus undercutting the existence of the tenth century BCE United Monarchy of David and Solomon (Fritz and Davies 1996). Several of the authors believed that state formation in Palestine occurred in the ninth centuries BCE in the north with the formation of the state of Israel.

A collection of essays was edited by Lester Grabbe in 1997 entitled *Can a "History of Israel" Be Written?* (Grabbe 1997b). Writers included scholars from across the spectrum: Hans Barstad, Bob Becking, Robert Carroll, Philip Davies,

Lester Grabbe, Niels Peter Lemche, Herbert Niehr, and Thomas Thompson. Grabbe was optimistic about the possibility of reconstructing Israel's history, most of the other authors were not. In that collection Robert Carroll called any history of ancient Israel a "bogus history" (Carroll 1997). In a similar vein, Thomas Thompson declared Israel to be a past reality that does not and cannot exist and said, "We have already identified 'ancient Israel' as a literary construct, and we are in the course of identifying ancient Judaism as a religious one" (Thompson 1997).

In 1998 Niels Peter Lemche wrote *Israelites in History and Tradition* describing the narrative of the biblical text to be fictional (Lemche 1998a). He observed the difficulty in reconstructing Israelite history when historiographical writings for both the Israelites and the ancient Near Easterners in general tend to be stereotypical, propagandistic, and fictional, so that trying to verify biblical narratives with ancient Near Eastern texts (Assyrian texts, the Mesha inscription) is fraught with problems (Lemche 1994; 2013a: 253–63; 2013b: 275–88). In the same year his *Prelude to Israel's Past: Background and Beginning of Israelite History and Identity* appeared in English (Lemche 1998b; the original came out in 1996). In this work he laid out his understanding of the early formation of Israel, and the work was a prelude to writing an actual history.

Thomas Thompson authored *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* in 1999, stating that any history of Israel could not be written and that archaeology was being used to prove the existence of a biblical Israel that never existed (Thompson 1999). In a sense, he indirectly repudiated his earlier work written in 1992 wherein he tried to reconstruct a minimal history. He was particularly critical of Dever's observations that pottery and other material archaeological data could be seen as "ethnic markers" to indicate the presence of Israelites in the eleventh century BCE, even though he had implied something similar in his 1992 book.

William Dever undertook a critical response to these authors in an article in 1998 attacking the methodological and intellectual assumptions of the minimalists, especially their post-modernism (Dever 1998). His fuller assault on their views came in his 2001 book, *What Did the Biblical Authors Know and When Did They Know It?*, and his 2003 book, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?*, wherein he accused minimalists of inadequate understandings of the findings of biblical archaeology and being nihilists who declare that nothing can be known and texts cannot be trusted (Dever 2001; 2003: 137–43). His latter work was more passionate because he was responding to the minimalist response to his 1998 essay. Lemche had characterized Dever as a "rustic", a "Zionist", and a "triumphalist" (Lemche 1998c; 2013b: 275–76). The debate was becoming very acrimonious. Another response to the minimalists was made by Jens Bruun Kofoed in his 2005 work, *Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text* (Kofoed 2005).

In 2007 Lester Grabbe wrote a moderating work, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (Grabbe 2007). He believed that in reconstructing history the primary sources were inscriptions and texts contemporary

with the events, and secondary sources were later renditions of the historical memory, such as the Bible. Though primary sources should be favored in historical reconstruction, sometimes the secondary sources were worthy of greater attention. In his reconstruction of Israel's history he felt that confirmed historical events mentioned in the biblical text include the names of kings and their approximate sequence in the biblical text, the general memory of king Mesha of Moab, the general memory of Aramean kings, Menahem's tribute to Assyria, Pekah's defeat by Assyria, the fall of Samaria, Hezekiah's revolt, Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, Manasseh's construction of a city wall in Jerusalem, some of Josiah's reforms, Necho's alliance with Assyria, and Jehoiakim's rebellion in 597 BCE. Possible historical events include Ahab's wars with the Arameans, Jehu's revolt, Athaliah's rule, the powerful reign of Jeroboam II, the Syro-Ephraimitic war, Amon's assassination, deportation of Babylonians to Palestine under Esarhaddon, and the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. However, incorrect historical memories in the Bible include Ahab's military weakness, Ben-Hadad's contemporaneity with Ahab, Manasseh's imprisonment, Manasseh's incompetence, Josiah's battle with Necho, and an empty land during the Babylonian Exile (Grabbe 207: 164–66, 212–15). Thus, Grabbe wisely and selectively wove his way between the views of maximalists and minimalists on the many issues of debate.

In 2008 Lemche put forth a comprehensive volume addressing many issues, but he included a critique of each period in the biblical era demonstrating how little historical memory was found in the biblical texts, and he subsequently offered his own reconstruction of Palestinian history from the Neolithic era into the Common Era (Lemche 2008: 110–63, 393–453). His historical survey of the era was both terse and thorough. He concluded that we can know nothing prior to 1000 BCE, our earliest literature comes from the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, the biblical history was created in response to the various exiles of peoples from Palestine (722 BCE; 701 BCE; 597 BCE; and 586 BCE), this biblical literature created a concept of "Israel" and the religious belief in monotheism after 500 BCE, and the literature finally came together as the Primary History in the Hellenistic era.

In 2015 Lemche put forward *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israel*, a second edition of his earlier 1988 *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society* (Lemche 2015; 1988). In reality it was merely a reprint, even the bibliography was not updated (as a page by page comparison reveals). There was a new fifteen-page introduction added in 2015 in which Lemche clearly articulated his outstanding arguments: 1) Israelites emerged out of the old Canaanites with no one coming into the land. 2) Israelite religion was Canaanite religion transformed into Jewish monotheism. 3) No historical sources older than the seventh century BCE exist in the Bible; history before 1000 BC must be reconstructed from ancient Near Eastern written sources. 4) The idea of history in the Bible came about due to the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE. 5) "Ancient Israel" of our textbooks is an ideological concept created by modern students of the Bible. 6) Judaism created Israel as its foundation myth in the late first millennium BCE. 7) The literature of the Old Testament arose in the Hellenistic era; it is barely older than Christianity.

Also, in the introduction he reiterated views that pre-exilic Jerusalem was never a significant city until the eighth century BCE, the Babylonian Exile was virtually a non-existent experience, Persian era Judah was an intellectual wasteland, the biblical texts arose in the third century BCE in Alexandria, and the idea of twelve tribes probably arose in Maccabean times in the second century BCE to create the image of a unified north (Israel) and south (Judah) which never existed in history. (I must admit that his views closely parallel my own now.)

Wiliam Dever undertook an extensive evaluation of the archaeological information we have currently at our disposal and crafted a history on the basis of this data primarily, relegating scripture to a secondary role due to the lateness of its authorial creation (Dever 2012; 2017). He proposed the following scenario:

1) In the eleventh century BCE undefended highland villages arose in Palestine that displayed cultural continuity with the earlier Bronze age culture of the villages in the lowlands. Though not unique to these highland villages, it was observed that folk built four-room houses for human and animal occupation, and pig bones were lacking in their middens (garbage ditches). The village configuration implies that the homes were often built for a family of several generations, and the village may have constituted a clan settlement, thus kinship was the organizing principle. For the sake of objectivity, Dever called these folk "proto-Israelites" but suspected that the Merneptah Stele of 1208 BCE may have referred to some of these people with the name "Israel".
2) In the late eleventh century BCE it appears that Philistine culture expanded into many sites in southwest Palestine, but in the early tenth century BCE some of these sites were destroyed and Philistine culture was circumscribed in its expansion to a limited area.
3) Several phenomena point to the existence of an organized state in the later tenth century BCE. There is a large stone pavement in Jerusalem, recently discovered. A well built fortress at Khirbet Qeiyafa, facing Philistine territory, as well as a number of fortresses in the Negev, imply a central government with the resources to build such sites. Copper mines in the Arabah could have been created only by a central government which could send slaves and overseers to work there. City gates in the city of Gezer, built before Sheshonq's invasion around 920 BCE (as evidenced by a burned layer), also imply the resources of a central government. Numerous sites destroyed by Sheshonq's invasion imply that this Egyptian pharaoh was targeting a significant political entity in southern and northern Palestine.
4) The ninth century BCE witnesses the creation of storage rooms at Megiddo (once thought to be Solomon's stables from the previous century). From this point onward tri-partite temples at Arad and other sites in Palestine and Syria indicate that the Jerusalem temple design was an iron age pattern for many peoples. In Jerusalem we found one hundred and fifty bullae, which are used to seal the strings that hold papyri, thus indicating not only literacy but perhaps state-sponsored economic activity with the corresponding need for written records.

5) The eighth century BCE provides us with evidence of tremendous wealth in Samaria, especially with the presence of ivory fragments, which correspondingly imply that highland peasants have been put at economic disadvantage because so much wealth was located in the hands of a few. Around 700 BCE evidence indicates that the destruction of Lachish was a horrendous event with great loss of life; this is also evidenced by the Lachish wall carvings in the British museum. Cities in both northern and southern Palestine range in size from large to small in a pattern that indicates state development and significant economic activity. At those sites archaeologists have uncovered palaces, governors' residences, storehouses, developed water systems, sometimes wall defenses, and cultic sites, all indicating a significant population.
6) The seventh century BCE is a period of peace throughout this era. As in earlier periods, but especially in this era, religious objects have been unearthed that correspond to the descriptions given in the books of 2 Kings as things targeted by King Josiah for removal (especially paraphenalia connected to the worship of Asherah).

Important for Dever's arguments are the ways in which he believes archaeological information supports the existence of authentic historical memory in the Deuteronomistic History of Judges, 1–2 Samuel, and 1–2 Kings. 1) The simple village life implied by Judges and 1 Samuel typifies highland life in the eleventh century BCE. 2) The struggle with the Philistines, unsuccessful with Saul, but successful with David, is undergirded by the appearance of Philistine expansion and retrenchment in the tenth century BCE. 3) The shape of the Jerusalem temple of Solomon described in the biblical text conforms to Iron Age temples elsewhere that no longer existed by the Persian era. 4) Copper mining in the Arabah in the tenth century BCE recalls the references to Solomon's mines. 5) Tremendous wealth located in the hands of the rich urban elite of Samaria justify the angry oracles (replete with references to ivory beds) by the classical prophets Amos and Hosea. 6) The destruction of Lachish indicates that the 701 BCE siege of Jerusalem, either proximate to the city or from a distance, as recalled in Isaiah 36–37 and the oracles of Isaiah, have authentic memories. 7) The reforms of Josiah recalled in 2 Kings 23 describe actual religious objects used by people in that age. Consequently, Dever would acknowledge that most of the narrative plotline of the Deuteronomistic History is fictionalized, but then strongly affirms that the documents remember historical background that no one in the Persian or Hellenistic eras could have recalled without having oral or written traditions from that earlier age.

As I read Dever's work, I boldly brought out a Bible and a highlighter and said that I would highlight those narratives in the text for which Dever provided some archaeological validation. I never took the cap off of the highlighter. Dever's archaeological evidence verifies general background phenomena behind the biblical narratives, but increasingly one senses after looking at this information and then reading the biblical text that the biblical text is highly fictionalized throughout. The biblical authors who created our texts knew that people lived in highland

villages in familial fashion, that Philistines were a significant coastal presence, the shape of temples in the Iron Age, that Jerusalem was at least a small administrative center, that Ahab and Omri once were significant kings, that rich people in Israel and Judah oppressed the poor, that the Assyrians destroyed Lachish in the late eighth century BCE, and that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in the early sixth century BCE. That is not much in my opinion. Someone in the Hellenistic era could easily have known that information with a few additional odds and ends of knowledge from that bygone era, such as what a pim is. To say that educated people in the Persian or Hellenistic eras could not know of some of these things with a minimum of scribal records is a brash assertion. Ultimately, I was rather stunned by how little was really proven.

On the other hand, Dever points out significantly how the archaeological data often contradict the biblical narrative, especially in regard to the biblical narrator's affirmation that only Jerusalem contained the shrine where people were to worship (for there were several altars in shrines throughout the land). Likewise, the affirmation that monotheism was the normative religious perspective of the people, or was supposed to be, according to the prophets who scolded them for backsliding, was an idealistic projection back into history. There are inscriptions that refer to Yahweh and Asherah (his wife!) and massive numbers of cultic objects which indicate that people were basically polytheists most of the time.

Other discontinuities between archaeology and the biblical text specifically mentioned by Dever include: 1) There is no evidence of a large scale invasion of the land around 1200 BCE, as implied by the book of Joshua. 2) David and Solomon had no large scale empire. 3) Solomon had no port at Ezion-Geber. 4) Omri and Ahab were not weak and ineffective kings. 5) At the siege of Jerusalem 185,000 Assyrians were not killed. Thus, when critics of Dever accuse him of trying to vindicate the Bible with his archaeology, being a "biblical archaeologist", that is a misnomer. They need to look more clearly at this list of discontinuities. Also, Dever is assailed by Protestant Evangelicals for being far too liberal in his assessments.

It is worth pointing out that no one in the minimalist camp has addressed the specifics of Dever's archaeological arguments. They speak in general terms of how Dever has marshalled some evidence that betokens perhaps a few historical memories may have been recalled by the later literature. But they imply that the data is rather insignificant in size and scope. I believe that this is the weakness of the minimalist arguments; they need to more directly address some of his information.

Attempt at resolution

Several scholars have pointed out that the maximalists, as represented by William Dever, and the minimalists, as represented by Giovanni Garbini, Philip Davies, Keith Whitelam, Niels Peter Lemche, and Thomas Thompson, are not that far apart in their beliefs. Both groups perceive that most of the biblical narratives are fictionalized and both affirm that history must be written primarily by using archaeological data. The nuance of difference is as follows: 1) The maximalists believe that

there is far more archaeological information that is helpful in reconstructing Israel's history than the minimalists will concede. 2) The maximalists believe that biblical literature began to evolve from the late seventh century BCE down into the late Persian period or late fourth century BCE, with later editorial additions, while the minimalists believe that most of the literature was generated in the Hellenistic era in the third and second centuries BCE with only a few traditions from the ages prior to that. The true differences are a matter of degree. The heated rhetoric that is thrown back and forth is abstract talk about historiographic assumptions and so-called "ideology", in which all parties involved exaggerate the positions of their opponents. If we overlook the heated rhetoric, most of which is not relevant to a reconstruction of a theoretic development of history and literature, one can develop a model that combines the scholarly observations of most of the parties involved.

Douglas Knight most perceptively observed this already in his 2012 response to William Dever (Knight 2012). He noted that both sides affirmed the priority of archaeology in reconstructing Israel's history. Knight also pointed out that as the later biblical texts were fictionalized, so often were the contemporary propagandistic Assyrian texts discovered by archaeologists. So archaeological data does not always provide the touchstone by which to begin to reconstruct history either.

Alice Hunt pointed out that Thompson calls the Bible ancient historiography and then turns around and calls it ideology or theology (Hunt 2012). He calls for the use of archaeology to write a history of Palestine, then declares that such a history cannot be written. In his free-wheeling criticism of the assumptions of others, Thompson fails to describe his own assumptions. Lemche has much to offer to the scholarly community, but Hunt said, "his inability to disengage from debilitating polemics … hinder the consideration of his ideas" (Hunt 2012: 100). Dever attacks the "minimalists" with furious rhetoric, but when he criticizes the use of archaeology to vindicate the Bible he appears to say what the minimalists say. Like the minimalists he declares that archaeology should be used to write the primary narrative of the history. Remove the fiery rhetoric and Dever is similar to the minimalists in many ways, said Hunt. Dever's disagreement "lies not in substance but in rhetoric and polemics" (Hunt 2012: 108).

Lester Grabbe boldly stated that he agrees with Thompson ten percent of the time, disagrees with him ten percent of the time, and eighty percent of the time he does not understand what he is saying (Grabbe 2012). Thompson critiques others, but does not tell us what his historical assumptions are. Dever attacks "postmodernism", but most postmodern critiques tend to be trivial, self-centered, coy, and cute; Dever's attacks do not really apply to biblical minimalists. Dever himself is more of a minimalist than a maximalist due to his critical view of the biblical text. These opponents are not that far apart once we get past the rhetoric.

The debate concerning the historical memory found in the Primary History is most significant for the discussion about the Hellenistic origins of the Primary History. If there are authentic pre-exilic memories in the Primary History, they appear to be minimal. The narratives of the Primary History are fictionalized to a great degree, even if there is historical memory found therein. If that historical memory is of a more general nature, and at some points quite vague, it increases

the likelihood that these narratives have been crafted at a late period of time. Dever locates what he believes to be authentic pre-exilic memories, but in my opinion they are minimal and general in nature. These memories could have been available to authors in the Persian period, and quite possibly in the Hellenistic period, even though Dever thinks that highly improbable. But they are so few and so general that their recall in that late era seems quite possible to me. When I observe how many stories belie their origin in the Hellenistic era, it becomes evident to me that much of the Primary History was crafted at that time by authors who did have earlier traditions at their disposal. I believe that any resolution will ultimately posit the final origin of the Primary History during the Hellenistic era. A consideration of the debate carried on by these great scholars concerning the historicity of the narratives in the Primary History leads me to believe that there are good arguments on both sides, yet the final conclusion has to be that the bulk of the Primary History originated in the Hellenistic era, as Lemche suggested a generation ago.

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